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# THE OLD ADAM.

A NOVEL. BY ?

APPEARS COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.

MAY, 1888

## LIPPINCOTT'S

### MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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THE  
OLD ADAM.

A NOVEL.

BY

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PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

THE

# OLD ADAM.

THE

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J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1888.

## THE OLD ADAM.

### CHAPTER I.

#### CIRCE'S SUITORS.

IT was a little Renaissance *salon*, or rather reception-room. Cupids with exaggerated legs danced along the frieze, pelting each other with roses. The ceiling was a mass of florid and elaborate stucco-work, which enclosed an open space wherein Apollo disported himself with the Muses. The walls were hung with rich faded tapestries, representing shepherds and shepherdesses, in powdered wigs and in all sorts of delightfully frivolous attitudes. There was a quantity of superb Oriental draperies, heavy and luxurious, about the windows and doors, which, from an artistic point of view, were a little out of tune with the walls and the ceiling. But it is inconvenient, at times, to be in harmony with your walls, when they are as exacting as those of the Palazzo Barberini.

Two men were standing in this exquisite *salon*, each staring with a blank and bored look at the dancing Cupids and turning his back resolutely on the other. The one was a young man of about twenty-five, slender of growth and undeniably handsome. He was as blond as a canary-bird, and as daintily made. His fine pale-yellow hair was parted in the middle, and as it were evaporated in a kind of fluffy cloud about his ears. When he walked, it waved to the rhythm of his step. He had a moustache too, of a little deeper yellow than his hair, and a fresh, rather girlish complexion. His face expressed gentleness and delicacy of sentiment. His features, though not remarkable in themselves, showed that he had been tenderly reared. Their neutrality was, however, relieved by a pair of large, blue, introspective eyes with a warm and luminous depth in them. They were mild, like the personality which they illustrated, but they were unusual, ardent, full of charming possibilities. In his attire the young man revealed an eye for effect which also departed slightly from the conventional standard.

The wide-brimmed soft hat which he held crumpled up in his hand, the extravagant knot of his scarlet neck-tie, his black velvet jacket, and light trousers, considerably wider than fashion prescribed, could only be permissible in an artist, to whom Custom grants, in dress as in morals, a limited exemption from her authority.

The other occupant of the room was a broad-backed, burly-looking man, well up in the forties, with a bald head, silky brown beard, and a florid complexion. You saw at once that he was an Englishman. For nature produces nowhere outside of the British Isles such robust physical manhood, such ruddy masculine necks, and such bad manners. Sir Percy Armitage—for that was the British gentleman's name—had not been two minutes in the room before he had managed, without opening his mouth, to give the young American the measure of his contempt for him; and the latter wondered, in a general way, what he had done to arouse the displeasure of the burly gentleman in the loose-fitting Tweed suit. But just as he was puzzling his brain with this unprofitable query, the door to the adjoining room was opened, and a French chambermaid entered, and remarked, with the most delightful courtesy, that Mademoiselle would be pleased to see him in a few minutes. The Englishman was obviously also interested in this announcement, for he turned abruptly around and gazed first at the chambermaid and then at his watch. He then seated himself, with unmistakable signs of impatience, in an easy-chair which creaked under his weight, and began to beat his leg with his walking-stick. He got up twice to leave, but reconsidered his intention and sat down again. Even the American could not, at the end of fifteen minutes, forbear to look at his watch and run his hand nervously through his hair. He heard in the next room a rich, clear voice singing a Venetian *barcarolle* with a difficult accompaniment which was rendered with precision and skill. But it struck him that there was a lack of sentiment in the voice, in spite of its superb purity. It was the voice of a sweet but unaroused nature. He could not doubt that it was the voice of Miss Constance Douglas. But who was this Miss Constance Douglas, who made British baronets, not to speak of American artists, cool their heels by the half-hour in her anteroom while she was sitting singing leisurely at her piano? She was, to be sure, closely related to a former President of the United States, and had no end of public men in her family. But, like all her relatives, she had found herself on the wrong side in the war, and had, like thousands of her countrywomen, staked her all on the result. She was no longer an heiress now who could afford to snap her fingers in the face of the world, but had managed to save a trifle from the general wreck,—just enough to support gentility, by a good deal of underground economy, in an historic Roman palazzo. It was scarcely her beauty alone, or the distinction of her family, which gave her the prestige which she enjoyed in the Eternal City. There were other women as beautiful and of a far more august lineage who had made abortive attempts to form *salons* in the old French sense; while about this stranger the *salon* formed itself without apparent effort on her part. The political and religious feuds which divide Italian society now, as they did in the days of the Mon-



agnès and Capulets, presented no difficulties to her. A Montague bowed with grave politeness to a Capulet, if her eyes rested upon them, and the Capulet returned the bow with elaborate ceremony. *Neri*\* and *Buonarri*\* rubbed shoulders without visible inconvenience, and diplomats accredited to the Vatican talked amicably with diplomats accredited to the Quirinal, about Zola or the figurantes of the Opera. All discordant notes melted into temporary harmony in her presence; under the charm of her voice all the wild beasts which prowl about in the heart of man went to sleep, drawing their claws back within their velvet paws. No one pretended to understand the arts by which Constance Douglas accomplished this miracle, though there was a general unanimity among the ladies, outside of her immediate circle, that they were black arts. However that may have been (for colors are, after all, mere individual impressions), a simpler explanation suggests itself. No one could look at her without having his whole vision filled. There was no room for other thoughts or impressions, either friendly or hostile, when she was present. But there, the door is opened, the tawny *portière* is drawn aside. You may judge for yourself. It is she.

Though Sir Percy and the young American had waited for her for thirty-five minutes, her coming was unexpected. She came into the room like a soft radiance, and in the twinkling of an eye the world was changed. They had both forgotten that they had been angry, and if anybody had told them they would have refused to believe it. She extended her hand to Sir Percy with unaffected cordiality, asked for his health, when he had come to Rome, etc.; then turned with the same gracious friendliness, in which there was yet a shadow of reserve, toward the younger man, and, motioning him to a seat, addressed to him some questions regarding his aunt, Mrs. Horace Talbot, in New York, from whom he had brought a letter of introduction.

"And you are a nephew, as I understand it, of Mrs. Horace Talbot," she went on, making her gracious eyes beam upon him, "and you have come here to Rome to continue your art studies?"

"Yes, exactly; to be sure," stammered the youth, in a sort of happy intoxication. He was so absorbed in the sight of her, so bewildered at her loveliness, that he could not divert energy enough from his vision to pay proper attention to her words.

"And you, Sir Percy," she continued, bending the same calm, softly radiant gaze upon the Englishman, "I presume you are fresh from the antipodes, as usual. Did you give my regards to the Shah of Persia, as I told you, and did you tell the Maharajah of Punjab that I disapprove of the burning of widows?"

"I did give your—aw—regards to the Shah," said Sir Percy, with a chuckle. "Of course I knew you were—aw—chaffing; but then, don't you know, I thought it was—aw—good fun, and so I told the Shah about you; and I shouldn't wonder—aw—if he turned up here one of these days and invited you to become—aw—Mrs. Shah. He grew uncommonly enthusiastic."

\* The papal and the Italian party.

"Thank you. Tell him I should like it above all things," she rejoined, smiling; "but I should insist upon his putting away all his other wives, and that might cause unpleasantness."

"Yes, perhaps it might, you know," laughed the baronet, taking a large silk handkerchief from his pocket and coughing into it.

"And I hope you got that rare *Nautilus* you went in search of?" she queried, with an air of interest which was bewitching.

"The *Nautilus*—aw—*pompilius*, you mean; but that is not—aw—so very rare. It was a yet unnamed—aw—species which a Dutch—aw—correspondent of mine at Madagascar sent me a drawing of that I—aw—went to get. Whether it is a nautilus, strictly speaking, some scholar—aw—will have to decide. I mean to submit it to—aw—Huxley as soon as I get back to London."

"And he will, of course, have the grace to name it after you,—*Nautilus Armitagibus*, or something like that. How delighted I shall be to see you immortalized in that way, Sir Percy!"

"*Armitagius*, if you will—aw—pardon the correction," ejaculated the baronet, flushed with enthusiasm. "You are very kind, I am sure—aw—Miss Douglas; and if you will permit me to show you my—aw—treasure before leaving Rome, I shall take it as a special favor."

"Why, of course. I should have been offended if you had left Rome without showing it to me."

"You are so very kind, you know, so very kind," he murmured, rising, and mopping his forehead with his red handkerchief.

"And perhaps you will permit me to introduce to you this young countryman of mine, in order that he may have a chance to share my pleasure. Mr. Talbot, Sir Percy Armitage. Mr. Talbot is an artist, and, as I am told, a very accomplished one. He has a professional interest in all that is beautiful."

The young American, suddenly collecting his scattered senses, jumped up and bowed to the baronet. He had not heard a word of the discussion, and did not know what he was expected to admire. Miss Douglas, perceiving and easily pardoning his abstraction, was, however, prompt to give him the clue.

"A nautilus which it has cost a journey around the world to get is worthy of a place in the Capitoline Museum," she said.

"I should—aw—prefer the British," observed Sir Percy.

"I should be charmed to see it," murmured Talbot, "though, of course, I am nothing of a naturalist."

"Any countryman—aw—of Miss Douglas is—aw—welcome to any pleasure which it is in my—aw—power to bestow," said the Briton, in an excess of gallantry.

"Take care, Sir Percy. You might repent of your hospitality."

"I have no fear, madam."

The gentlemen were both on the watch for an opportunity to take their leave, when Hortense, the piquante chambermaid, appeared with a tray of Japanese lacquer upon which were two teapots and half a dozen cups of the daintiest Japanese porcelain. She emerged with her tray from the folds of the tawny drapery like an attendant spirit in the "Arabian Nights" who appears when he is needed in response to the

unspoken wish. It was impossible, of course, to resist tea of such exquisite flavor, such teacups, and, above all, such an invitation, so simply and cordially spoken. The two men seated themselves again, and their hostess took her place at a small table, conversing with that beautiful ease and simplicity which made every word she uttered in a way remarkable, while she poured the water on the fragrant leaves and waited for the result to declare itself. There was an air of the *grande dame* about her which is extremely rare in unmarried women. It comes in its perfection only to happy natures, satisfied with their surroundings and secure in their dignity. It is therefore that American women so rarely attain it while at home. And yet, by transplantation, they often develop something closely resembling it. Not the perfect repose, perhaps, and lofty disdain which daughters of a hundred earls can afford to exhibit, but an admirable tact combined with a gentle animation and a gracious suavity of demeanor. It was the combination of these gifts in an exceptional degree which made Constance Douglas the great social success which she was reputed to be in Rome. She had, moreover, a fine amplitude of person, which never failed to impress. Men, no matter where they hailed from, found themselves (metaphorically speaking) in the dust before her. All who knew her were more or less in love with her, and frankly avowed their worshipful homage.

As she sat there at the tea-table, with her noble arms moving among the dainty cups, you perceived that she was no longer in the first flush of youth. That she was past twenty-five you would have guessed from her speech and manner rather than from her complexion, which was fresh and delicate. But a certain experience is implied in a grand air and a noble bearing. Constance Douglas had gone abroad with her mother when scarcely more than a child, a few months after the destruction of their plantation by the Federal troops. She was prematurely grown because of the many responsibilities which devolved upon her during those days, especially in connection with the great fair in aid of the Confederacy which was held in Liverpool in the first or second year of the war. Her father, who rose to be a general, was killed about that time in a cavalry skirmish and was duly apotheosized in the Confederate press. He was a cool-headed and sagacious man, who had drawn his sword reluctantly but had wielded it bravely when no other choice remained for him. This one daughter, who resembled him as much as a woman can resemble a man without loss of charm, had been his pet and dearest companion from her earliest years. He had recognized from the first the fineness of her nature, and infused her unconsciously with respect for her own personality. Her mother, who was amiable and commonplace, was frankly puzzled at the sensation Constance made, but accepted the general estimate of her, and sank into willing subordination. Some women are born to be rulers and some to be slaves, and it is not difficult to discover the category to which each belongs. No one, whose opinion was worth anything, looked twice at Miss Douglas without recognizing the definiteness and distinctness of her personality, and falling under the spell of its warm, sweet radiance. Young Talbot, who was a very sensitive piece of organism, after having absorbed

her beauty in its totality, began to analyze it, feature by feature, as he sipped his tea, and came to the conclusion that it was made up of something else besides features. Her blond, wavy hair, which curled a little about the temples, was arranged in some simple manner, without any visible striving for effect. And yet the effect, Talbot thought, was admirable. The firm and noble lines which formed the contour of her head made him itch to get hold of his pencil. He had never seen so beautiful a head before; or, on second thought, perhaps he had, but he had never seen one so superbly set upon the shoulders, nor one so grandly carried. In fact, her whole woman was built upon a grand scale, like a goddess revived, lest men should lose the faculty of worship. The mere combination of fine but not very striking features was quite inadequate to account for the impression which she made. Her forehead was rather low, or at least appeared so, her nose straight and delicately fashioned, the curve of her lips drawn with fine precision, her chin saved by the soft freshness of her complexion from appearing too energetic. But, after all, what idea does this imperfect catalogue give of how she really looked? It was the deep-blue eyes, so calm and gently radiant, that lighted up these pure but not unusual features, and a smile that seemed new every time you saw it, and that dignified you in your own eyes whenever it beamed upon you. Sir Percy and Mr. Talbot both felt as if they had been taken into her confidence by that rare smile, and each felt convinced that he possessed her favor in a higher degree than the other. Considering this fact, which disposed them amiably toward creation in general, they concluded to make a few cautious approaches to each other, simply out of regard for the charming hostess who was responsible for their acquaintance.

"I shouldn't wonder if I might get you some rare specimens of shells from Florida," Talbot ventured to remark, lifting his mild blue eyes shyly to the Englishman's hirsute countenance.

"You are—aw—very civil, I am sure," Sir Percy remarked, a trifle gruffly. "I have all the—aw—Floridian shells already, and unless you should—aw—happen to discover a new species, which I don't suppose you would—aw—be likely to do, I really shouldn't care for them, you know."

Talbot felt as if he had been slapped in the face, and strove vainly to conceal his discomfiture. Miss Douglas, who was quick to interpret the blush that mantled his cheeks, hastened to apply balm to his wounded feelings.

"You know, Mr. Talbot," she said, sweetly, "that Sir Percy has probably the greatest collection of marine shells in the world, and has long since explored our American waters. Now, I should be perfectly delighted if you would give me a few specimens of your Florida shells, just because they are American, you know, and from the dear land of Dixie."

It was not only the words, but the cordiality with which they were uttered which suddenly raised the young man to a pinnacle of distinction. He looked down upon the baronet with exultation from glorious heights.

"If you will permit me to send you the few modest conchs which



I picked up last winter on the Florida reefs," he said, with happy animation, "I shall be very much pleased."

"I shall expect them surely, and I shall hold them to my ear in the hope that they will murmur some melody of the Southern sea."

"I hope they will, I'm sure; but I am afraid they will disappoint you. You know, of course, I have no scientific knowledge of shells, like Mr.—Mr. Percy—beg your pardon—Mr. Armitage, I mean."

The poor fellow turned his eyes appealingly to Miss Douglas. He knew he was blundering, but he could not make up his mind to call a stranger by his first name. He seemed to be running his head into a noose in whatever direction he turned. Miss Douglas returned his glance with smiling sympathy, and was about to speak, but was anticipated by Sir Percy.

"You do me more—aw—honor than I deserve," he said. "I have no—aw—scientific interest whatever in shells. The fact is, I was—aw—suffering from a disease of the liver, and my physician ordered me to get up—aw—some interest in something—aw—or other, just to divert me, you know, and make time pass. I tried race-horses, but—aw—got tired of them. I couldn't help backing my own—aw—beasts, you know. I didn't mind so much the money I lost on them; but the—aw—vexation, you know, the vexation,—that was having a bad effect on my system, and I had—aw—to give them up."

"I don't wonder," Constance replied, "at your giving up your race-horses. But those beautiful cows you showed me at Donnymere, three years ago,—I can scarcely forgive you for selling them."

"Blooded cattle, you know—aw—are an awful bore," the baronet rejoined, with the emphasis of conviction. "I tried Alderneys first, but—aw—they ran all to cream and wasted money. They gave—aw—too rich milk and too little of it to pay for their feed and care. I had—aw—no better luck with the—aw—Jerseys; and as for the Short-horns, I could have murdered them before—aw—I was done with them. But they spared me the trouble, for they—aw—had an unpleasant habit of dying without—aw—a moment's warning."

"But I have a tender spot in my heart for those lovely cows yet," Constance declared. "If they had been mine, I should have been tempted to go into mourning for them."

Half an hour passed, and they sat chatting and sipping tea and luxuriating in a vague, unobtrusive felicity which it seemed a pity to make an end of. Sir Percy was waiting for Talbot to make the signal for departure, and Talbot was waiting for Sir Percy. To tear one's self away from the presence of a woman so perfect in face, dress, and manner requires a heroism of which neither was possessed. There was a sweet intoxication in merely listening to her voice and in inhaling the aroma of her exquisite personality. But the entrance of the maid Hortense, carrying a silver salver upon which lay a card whose small size indicated that it belonged to the masculine gender, was felt as a faint discord and sufficed to break the spell.

Sir Percy got up with a desire to strangle the gentleman who had the impertinence to choose such an inopportune moment for his call, and Talbot made three efforts to detach himself from his chair. He

was quite clear in his mind that he would have liked to spend the rest of his life in Miss Douglas's company; but he was not at all sure that she reciprocated his desire. With a good deal of blushing and confusion he managed, however, to make his exit without having committed himself, and brushed in the door-way against an officer in a splendid French uniform, the scabbard of whose sword knocked against the stairs for each step he took. He noticed, too, that Sir Percy, who was a few steps behind him, bowed to the gorgeous Gaul with a ferocity as if he would like to eat him.

"That monkey of a Frenchman!" he muttered to himself, as he descended the stairs.

But from within they presently heard, through the yet unclosed door, Miss Constance's voice greeting the visitor with joyous cordiality.

"Count de Saint-Réault!" she exclaimed, in French. "I am pleased to see you."

## CHAPTER II.

### ARCADES AMBO.

I DO not know whether it was fate, or chance, or the common grudge against the obnoxious Frenchman, which drew Talbot and Sir Percy together and inclined them to a few exchanges of frigid civility. Thus, when they met by accident, a few days after their call upon Miss Douglas, in a small bronze-shop in the Via Marguta, the baronet submitted some specimens of the craftsman's art to the young American and asked his opinion of them. Talbot, in whose mind Sir Percy, with all his disagreeableness, was somehow associated with Miss Douglas, resolved to be amiable, and gave quite an elaborate opinion, which revealed incidentally his taste and intimate knowledge.

"Why, to be sure, you are—aw—rather clever, don't you know?" the Briton observed, with a frank surprise which was anything but complimentary to his interlocutor.

Talbot, who always blushed when he did not know what else to do, exhibited a flaming and disgusted face, but had no phrase in readiness wherewith to express his displeasure. Sir Percy, on the other hand, who had meant to be particularly pleasant, could not understand how he had given offence.

"These Americans are—aw—rather a queer lot—aw—uncommonly queer lot," he remarked to the bronze-worker as Talbot picked up his hat and violently jingled the shrill little door-bell in his eagerness to be gone.

A few days later they ran against each other in the Borghese gallery and had again a little disagreement; and before the week had ended they had had at least half a dozen encounters. Sir Percy haunted the galleries early and late, in spite of the fact that he declared them to be a bore,—a deuced bore,—and Talbot, who was yet in the picturesque intoxication which usually comes in the second or third week of one's sojourn in Rome, revelled with a glorious unrestraint in the beauty that crowded in upon him on all hands. He was not in the least afraid of appearing fresh, but praised and condemned with a

heedless sincerity which to Sir Percy appeared quite delightful. In fact, he completely conquered the latter's regard by a piece of eccentricity which would scarcely have commended him to anybody else's favor. They had been spending the morning together in the Vatican, Talbot deeply absorbed in the contemplation of Raphael's famous *loggie* and *stanze*, and the baronet stalking about with a bored air and frowning upon every one who crossed his path. They had no intention of keeping company, but as they found themselves by chance on the steps at the hour of closing, and it was raining hard, Sir Percy could not well avoid offering the young man a seat in his cab.

"I am much obliged," said Talbot; "but I should have to take you out of your way: I have to go to the telegraph office."

"Never mind. I'll take you there."

Away they rolled past the great fountain and the long colonnade that encloses the Square of St. Peter, and after a short drive reached the telegraph office, where the painter alighted.

"You won't take it amiss—aw," began Sir Percy, when after an absence of a few minutes he returned, "if I ask you—aw—if you telegraphed for money, don't you know? Artists, you know, and that sort of thing—aw—well, you mustn't be huffy about it, but if—aw—I can accommodate you in any way, you needn't hesitate to let me know; that is, if you feel like it, don't you see?"

Talbot was too vividly conscious of the Briton's benevolent intention to be at all huffy, but, for all that, the patronage and condescension implied in this unsolicited offer of pecuniary aid grated upon his sensibilities. He twirled his tawny moustache with nervous indecision, and blushed like a peony, while he summoned courage to stammer, "No, I thank you; I don't need money at all,—or rather, I should say, I have all I want for the present. The message I sent related to quite different matters; in fact, it related to Raphael."

"Raphael! Did you telegraph about Raphael?"

"Yes: I telegraphed to the fellows of our club at home that I was disappointed in him."

"You cabled to America that you were—aw—disappointed in Raphael!"

Sir Percy's amazement knew no bounds. He leaned forward with an eagerness not often seen in his apathetic features, and scrutinized the young artist's face with vivid interest.

"You know, the fellows at home they set some store by my opinion," Talbot explained, struggling with his embarrassment, "and it is the night of their monthly meeting: they will get it just in time."

"Yes, yes,—I shouldn't wonder," observed the baronet. "And the fellows, you say, set store by your—aw—opinion. Well, now—aw—since we are talking about it, so do I. And wouldn't you—aw—come and dine with me to-night, if you have nothing better? And then—aw—you will tell me too—don't you know?—why you are disappointed in Raphael."

Although he had not the least inclination to accept, Talbot vainly hunted in his brain for the proper phrases wherewith to decline, and, failing to find them, murmured something which sounded like "thanks"

and "honor" and which could mean nothing but acceptance. He had, accordingly, no choice but to present himself at the appointed hour at the Palazzo Altemps, where the baronet had a superb apartment, which he rented by the year. Whether it was the wine he drank or the mere artistic aroma of the magnificent high-ceiled rooms which went to Talbot's brain, it was undeniable that his capricious use of language had something peculiarly kindling about it, and Sir Percy was completely fascinated. He made him talk without ceasing, drew him out by all sorts of ingenious questions, and incited him to controversy by contradiction.

"Those fishermen of Galilee," the young enthusiast exclaimed, in his fiery indictment of Raphael's art, "what sort of fish, I should like to know, could they have caught with those ample academic robes? If you ever caught a blue-fish on a trolling-line, or a black bass with a grasshopper on your hook, you will admit the absurdity of the costume of Raphael's apostles. But they are only surpassed in absurdity by the faces. Men with such noble, pensive brows, such philosophic melancholy, do not take to fishing for a living; and, if they did, they would starve at it. Their classic features would become furrowed, scratched, and weather-beaten. And, I confess, to me they would be far more beautiful if the wind, the sun, and the rain had put the stamp of toil and suffering upon them. But the whole academic art is a falsehood from beginning to end,—a beautiful lie, which the nations believed in as long as there were men among them whose genius sufficed to vitalize the lie, to fill it with their own blood-red personalities. Therefore I like Michael Angelo's colossal conceptions, even if they be lies, better than Raphael's; because the man behind them is so great that you care for nothing except his stupendous self,—his mighty thought that sprang into being in stone and marble and color."

"I swear," remarked Sir Percy, when, long after midnight, he took leave of his transatlantic guest, "I would take my oath on it that I never met a cleverer fellow than you in all my life. I have been pretty much everywhere,—don't you know?—but men and—aw—women are about as stupid in China as they are in London, and in Kamchatka as in Paris. But you,—I'd take my oath on it,—you are—aw—you are uncommonly clever. You must dine with me soon again, and I'll have some—aw—pleasant people here to meet you."

That was the beginning of the curious friendship, which so long puzzled the Eternal City, between Sir Percy Armitage, Bart., and the young and obscure American, George Talbot, Esq., whose career forms a not unimportant portion of the present narrative. It was but a few days after the above-recorded meeting that the painter was induced to take up his quarters in the Palazzo Altemps, where he fared sumptuously and entertained his host by his iconoclastic opinions. He inspected the famous collection of marine shells which had cost its proprietor a moderate fortune, and which had kept him for several years in a spasmodic vacillation between the antipodes. Most people hearing of his good fortune envied him, and there was but one who expressed regret; and that was Miss Douglas.



## CHAPTER III.

## AMONG THE DEAD.

It was about a week after his removal to the Palazzo Altamps that George Talbot received a card informing him that Mrs. and Miss Douglas would be at home every Wednesday afternoon from December 1 until April 1,—an announcement which filled his breast with conflicting emotions. He had about made up his mind that Miss Douglas was too absorbing a creature to admit of a divided allegiance. A man could scarcely cultivate the arts and her at the same time. He would have to take his choice and abide by it. That it would be folly for him to aspire for the love of so queenly a woman, accustomed to universal homage, was a reflection which in his saner moments often invaded the young man's mind. But the old proverb, "Nothing venture, nothing win," seemed so very appropriate in this connection that he could not afford to turn a deaf ear to the faint whisper of hope which it contained. He had walked about in a state of feverish uneasiness during the last week, nursing all sorts of wild plans whereby to attract the world's attention, and thereby Miss Douglas's favor. But there was always a hitch in all of them which made it seem advisable to postpone their execution to a more convenient time. He found it impossible to work while this frame of mind lasted, and therefore placed himself entirely at Sir Percy's disposal, roaming with him over the Campagna, and visiting Tivoli, Frascati, Tusculum, and all the delightful villages in the Alban and Sabine Mountains. It was during one of these idle rambles that they happened to enter the ghastly crypt of the Capuchin monastery, where the mummified corpses of dead monks stand in niches along the walls, and skulls, teeth, shoulder-blades, and thigh-bones, arranged in architectural designs, curdle one's blood with their hideous object-lessons in mortality. Sir Percy, who had once contemplated a collection of similar mortuary relics to be artistically arranged in his private chapel at Donnymere, was talking laborious and incorrect Italian with the monk who acted as their guide, being anxious to know whether the monastery (considering the fact that the Italian government would be sure to confiscate the collection sooner or later) might not be induced to sell out at a reasonable price, and have the skeletons and the soil from Jerusalem exported to England, where the good brothers would have a much better chance of an undisturbed sleep, while awaiting the summons of the last trump. The monk, who was accustomed to all sorts of queer propositions from Englishmen, smiled blandly, but refused to commit himself.

"I suppose the old fellow expects—aw—some day himself to decorate the vault with his—aw—ribs and legs and empty eye-sockets," Sir Percy remarked in English to Talbot, who stood lost in contemplation of a hooded corpse whose fleshless hands and nose were protruding from the sacred soil.

"It is more likely he has staked his soul's salvation on the chance of sleeping for a while in the soil from Golgotha, until a later claimant

comes and ousts him," said the American: "those monks often have peccadilloes on their conscience which require heroic treatment."

"Thin it is a mighty slim chance Oi have, sorr," the monk remarked, in the broadest Irish brogue. "'Tis the guvvernment of the infidel usurperrs won't allow no more burrials insoide the walls at all, at all."

He turned with an air of deep disgust toward the door, which was just being opened from the outside, admitting a broad stream of sunlight, in which the illuminated dust danced. A tall, handsome girl, accompanied by a stooping, dark-complexioned man, entered and advanced with a brisk and rather masculine stride toward the friar. There was something a trifle defiant in the erectness of her bearing, in the unabashed stare of her light blue eyes, and in the free and easy manner in which she moved her blond, attractive head. That she was an American, there could be no doubt. She might be described as a very personification of the Declaration of Independence. Even the loose lock of crimped hair which had escaped from its confinement and curled about her ear seemed bent upon asserting its freedom. She wore a brown spring ulster, buttoned with enormous bronzed buttons representing owl's heads, and a rakish-looking soft hat, set askew and trimmed with an audacious bunch of feathers. In her hand she carried a stout umbrella, which she swung like a walking-stick. Her companion, who was tall and large-limbed, was wrapped in a thick dark overcoat which was a trifle rusty and threadbare. A dense, black, uncared-for beard hung in rags and tags about his cheeks and chin, and a pair of fiery black eyes gazed forth from under the broad brim of his ecclesiastical-looking hat. His features were crude and strong, with just a touch of half-subdued savagery. As he removed his hat on entering the vault, a broad, angular forehead became visible, upon which there was a scar, as from a burn. His hair, which was thick and black, was divided on the right side; and in the parting there was a cowlick which had raised a tuft, so that it stood up straight. The occiput was strongly developed, and had a rugged look. The hair in the back was a trifle long, and hung an inch over the coat-collar. He kept one fist clinched, and walked with a long, eager stride which expressed restlessness and energy. The man was, to all appearances, about thirty years old; but there were lines in his face and deep perpendicular wrinkles in his brow which thirty years would not have sufficed to trace.

"Nat," said the girl, in a bold but not unmelodious voice, "what did you take me into such a nasty place for? I don't like dead folks, especially when they stand up on end and pretend to be sociable."

"I think it is a very interesting place," her companion retorted, in a deep, sonorous bass. "It does every one good to be brought face to face with death. It reminds us how brief our little span of years is, and how fleeting are earthly joys and sorrows."

"Don't preach to me, sir," ejaculated the girl, with a laugh which resounded strangely in the sepulchral vault. "You know it's no good. Who did you say these interesting gentlemen are?"

"Capuchins."

"Yes, I see they have got caps, but I don't think their chins are much to brag of."

She laughed again, and lifted her umbrella as if to poke one of the defunct friars with the end of it. Her companion, whose rigid sobriety seemed a rebuke to her levity, quickly seized her wrist and held it in a tight grip.

"Delia," he said, sternly, "do not carry your antics too far. You know I am responsible for you."

"Well, I like that!" she ejaculated, with a saucy fling of her head. "If you are responsible for me, Nat Burroughs, you have a pretty big contract on your hands, I tell you."

She took a little swaggering promenade in front of the great wall of skulls, as if to assert her independence, and then, returning to her Mentor, coolly observed,—

"I should like these gentlemen better, Nat, if they had a little more flesh on their bones."

"I should like you better," he retorted, "if you could be serious in the presence of serious things."

Talbot and Sir Percy, who had been standing at the farther end of the crypt, with their backs to the new-comers, had listened with much amusement to this colloquy.

"Countrymen of yours, apparently," said Sir Percy, with that quiet satisfaction which an Englishman feels when an American makes a fool of himself.

"Yes, apparently," sighed Talbot.

"Do you know them?"

"I am afraid I do,—that is, I have met the girl. I have not yet looked at her, but her style is unmistakable."

"Who is she?"

"Miss Saunders,—Cordelia Saunders, known to the newspapers as the Beautiful Heathen. She is a dress-reformer, temperance-lecturer, woman-suffragist, and I don't know what not. She has written a book on the Mormons, with her picture with a high man's collar on, as a frontispiece."

Miss Saunders, who in her promenade had approached the two gentlemen, was suddenly struck with the resolute and uncompromising look of the large and the small back which they presented to her. She saw at once that there was an intention in this unnatural immobility, and guessed easily what that intention was. The spirit of devilry was aroused in her, and she stationed herself behind them and viewed them with exaggerated interest. Sir Percy's broad figure, arrayed in a rough Tweed sack-coat and trousers, his red, angry-looking neck, covered with fine hair which here and there grew in capricious little curls, his stout legs wide apart, and his hands thrust into his coat-pockets, seemed to her a very epitome of Great Britain, while Talbot's imitation of the attitude, on a smaller scale, seemed no less characteristically American.

"Are these two part of your collection?" she asked the Irish monk in her loud voice, pointing at the two backs with her umbrella.

"No, mum; not as I know of, mum," replied the friar, curbing his Hibernian wit, which suggested quite a different answer.

"Nat," she continued, turning to her companion, who was again at her side, "you don't think there is any chance of my selling any of my Emancipation Waists to any of these gentlemen? On the whole, I think they are dressed in a very sensible fashion. I have no reform to suggest, except in their manners."

Sir Percy, who a moment ago had been bristling with dignity and anger, found this remark so droll that he had to laugh.

"She is rather clever, don't you know?" he whispered to his *protégé*. "Suppose we turn around and walk out?"

"As you please," Talbot answered, and suited his action to the words.

"Why, Georgie Talbot!" cried Miss Saunders, enthusiastically, grasping his hand and shaking it as if she meant to shake it off. "I am delighted to see you. Why, it rejoices my soul to see your good American face, even though your hair is parted in the middle."

"Yours, I presume, is parted on the side," he answered, with a feeble smile, "so of course I had no other expedient left to indicate my sex by."

"Good for you, Georgie! Why, you've grown quite smart since I saw you last."

"Permit me to suggest that it is you who have acquired greater penetration."

"Now, that is not bad, either. In fact, it is rather good. Why, George Talbot, I haven't appreciated you properly. We must see a good deal of each other this winter. I am staying at Madame Tellenbach's, on the Spanish Piazza,—isn't that it? You know where that is?"

"Yes, I know."

"I am at home pretty much every evening, and shall be expecting you real soon."

"Thank you. I shall be sure to call."

"And your friend there,—if you want to bring him along, he is welcome."

Talbot, although he had been standing on needles, expecting some such breach of etiquette, was so shocked that he scarcely knew what to answer. He was determined to save Sir Percy an undesirable acquaintance, even at the expense of his own politeness, and was just framing some transparent excuse, when, to his astonishment, the baronet stepped up, as if to participate in the conversation. He had then, of course, no choice but to introduce him.

"Sir Percy Armitage, Miss Saunders," he murmured, gazing from the one to the other, and wondering what the world was coming to.

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Saunders," said Sir Percy, stiffly.

"I knew you were an Englishman the moment I put my eyes on you," exclaimed Cordelia, unabashed. "Our American gentlemen never have such necks and such backs; at least it isn't the part of themselves they are proud of and want to show off."

A gleam of amusement lighted up Sir Percy's face again. He saw the point of her sarcasm well enough, but he did not notice it.



"Yes, your climate—aw—is rather drier than ours," he remarked, in his heavy drawl. "It does not develop a sturdy physique."

"Yes, and our habits are drier, too," she retorted. "We don't drink so much."

"I wasn't aware of that. I thought—aw—your national pride was based largely on your mixed drinks. At all events—aw—I found it so when—aw—I was in America, three years ago."

"You evidently got into bad company, Mr. Armitage. You know mixed society is quite as destructive of morals as mixed drinks."

"Next time I go, I shall—aw—with your permission, put myself in your charge, and you will—aw—inform me where I can study the national manners to advantage."

"I shall be delighted. You know I have recently taken the European agency for the Emancipation Waist, which is to take the place of the tight and ruinous corsets with which women now undermine their health. If I could have an English baronet in tow, it would be worth a hundred thousand as an advertisement."

"I don't quite see that, you know. But—aw—I am not sure—aw—that I should relish being appreciated—aw—in the light of an advertisement."

They kept up their international sparring for some minutes, until the lugubrious gentleman in the rusty overcoat came up and stood watching for an opportunity to address the lady. She promptly seized the opportunity to introduce him.

"This is my cousin, Mr. Burroughs, of South Bend, Indiana," she said, indicating the black-browed man with the point of her umbrella. "He got into the clutches of a sly and smooth-spoken Jesuit, some years ago, and got converted to Catholicism. Now he has come here to be consecrated for the priesthood. I came along just to keep him straight, you know."

She mentioned neither Talbot's nor Sir Percy's name, but contented herself with epitomizing her cousin's biography in a version of which the subject manifestly disapproved.

"I wish you would tell the truth about me, if you have to tell anything," he said, with rude severity; then, turning to the two gentlemen, he continued, earnestly, "It is the Lord who has guided me in the path I have chosen, and Jesuit craft has had nothing to do with it."

It was a little embarrassing to resume the thread of the jocular conversation after that solemn declaration, and, prompted by a simultaneous impulse, all began to move toward the door. Sir Percy gave a *lira* to the monk, as he emerged into the daylight, and received in return his blessing. He then dumfounded Talbot by inviting Miss Saunders and her cousin to occupy the vacant seats in his carriage, and by betraying an interest in the lady's slangy remarks which seemed quite incomprehensible. The mere fact that she was pretty could scarcely account for such attention. She was a part of a middle-aged gentleman's life, in matters of etiquette. Miss Saunders was twenty-six years old, and, though her dress nor appearance vulgar. When she was introduced to the Emancipation Waist from which she

promised herself such untold blessings to the race, could not by a superficial view be determined; but her tailor-made ulster fitted very snugly about her tall, handsome form, and her boots were so neat and shapely that you felt tempted to shake hands with them. She had blond hair and a good complexion, but her most distinctive feature was her pale-blue eyes, with that challenging stare in them, which turned their inquisitive light with the same irreverent scrutiny upon whatever came in their way. In the whole cut and expression of her face there was something unshrinking, unveiled, and frankly resolute. It might have been a handsome boy's face, except for the lips, whose soft curve was feminine. You saw that she had set out in an adventurous mood to conquer the world, and that she anticipated no great difficulty in accomplishing her purpose. With all her audacity, she was clothed in innocence as in a garment. Even Sir Percy, though he was no great philosopher, had not talked long with her before he perceived that she was touchingly ignorant of the world which she was challenging to battle. He even began to suspect that she misbehaved from principle, or at least exaggerated her disregard of social forms for the purpose of asserting, in the name of her sex, her contempt for them. Sir Percy admitted to himself, as he sat opposite to her in his cab, listening to her glib, reckless talk, that he did not dislike her half as much as he had expected to do. She refused to be classified, of course, and it was impossible to pick out any social sphere to which she belonged. But then that was a peculiarity she had in common with the majority of her countrymen, who were impossible, from the English point of view, and yet, considered from any other point of view, not only possible, but both clever and entertaining. Sir Percy, being at present abroad and bent upon amusement, resolved in a mild and harmless way to cultivate Miss Saunders.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A CHARMING TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

GEORGE TALBOT was enjoying the felicity of a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Douglas in the little Renaissance reception-room. There were a hundred things he would have liked to tell her, but her beauty stupefied him like strong wine and made him incoherent and distracted. All sorts of daring speeches trembled on the tip of his tongue, but when he attempted to utter them they turned out to be feeble and commonplace and quite different from what he had intended. He knew, of course, that it would be absurd to talk to her of love on so short an acquaintance, but he had an idea that it would not be amiss if he could convey to her an impression of his profound and abject admiration, without yet trespassing on forbidden territory. Her gentle affability, which was yet so full of reserve, made him suspect a long experience in warding off tender avowals. She was purposely obtuse, because she did not wish to understand. She treated him with a sort of elder-sisterly kindness which was quite exasperating. She was obviously sorry for him, and wished to be spared the necessity of wounding his feelings. He half regretted that he had come, and yet

luxuriated in the sight of her noble, placid face and her exquisitely tasteful costume. He would have been at a loss to describe it; but the general effect was that of rich and ancient lace, and warm, subdued colors harmoniously blended. Her arms, which were half visible through the sleeves, struck him with wonder, they were so firm and white, and the little dimple in the wrist emphasized the perfection of their modelling. The clear warm shadow of her chin upon the little glimpse of neck which was bared made him almost shiver with delicious appreciation. He revelled in the sight of her, yet was strangely impressed with her remoteness, her preciousness, her august dignity, by virtue of a beauty which seemed exalted above common humanity.

"I hear from Sir Percy," she was saying, obviously to make conversation, "that you are so charmingly situated in the Palazzo Altemps. I am told your studio is quite a museum of Eastern rugs and *bric-à-brac*."

"Eastern rugs,—yes, quite so," murmured he, lost in contemplation.

"And now, I suppose, you are preparing to lay siege to Rome and take it by storm."

"No. Oh, no; I have no hostile intentions whatever," he replied, with burning ears. He was beginning to suspect that he was surpassing himself in asininity.

"It would not be the first time the barbarians have conquered the Eternal City," she observed, with that radiant smile which always put his apprehensions to flight. It was so warm, so satisfying, so reassuring, so expressive of interest and kindly feeling, that all torturing doubt and fear and jarring emotions evaporated in it like dew in the sunshine. As Count de Saint-Réault (an avowed adorer of Miss Douglas) remarked, it would make the damned forget their woes. It was a sufficient equipment for success both in this world and in the world to come, for it could only belong to a noble and exquisite personality.

"I was a little afraid, Mr. Talbot," she began, after a pause, "that it would not be for your good to be too closely associated with a rich and eccentric man like Sir Percy. You know I believe independence, even if coupled with poverty, to be a precious thing, and, if you will allow me to be frank with you, I have just a foolish little fear that you will not be able to assert your personality in the presence of Sir Percy, if you have to look up to him as your benefactor."

She gazed sweetly at him with her gentle eyes, and there was such a world of kindness and sympathy in her words that the young man could not help being touched. A warm current of emotion gushed through his veins, and he felt irresponsibly and irrationally happy. With an effort he aroused himself, ran his fingers through his hair, and walked abruptly to the window. He was not aware at the time that the view from that window is famous. And to Talbot it did not matter, for he scarcely saw anything of what he was looking at. He turned about at the end of a minute or two, feeling "clothed and in his right mind."

"It is very kind of you, Miss Douglas," he said, with a desperate effort to clear his thoughts, as his eyes again rested upon her, "to feel any apprehension on my account. I have no fear myself of losing my personality in that of Sir Percy. The fact is," he added, recklessly, "my personality is lost already. My heart, my reason, my very soul, is lost, but it is not Sir Percy's fault."

He had half expected her to ask whose fault it was, but for some reason she betrayed no curiosity to know. He felt a wild need to tear his hair, to rend his clothes, as the Israelites of old did when the world went against them, or to make some other violent demonstration of despair. But her clear, calm voice (which was not a whit less kindly than before) again soothed his agitation and made him cry out to the gods to make him behave rationally.

"That is, on the whole, a very wholesome feeling," she said in response to his dithyrambics, "and I should be sorry for an artist who was incapable of the emotion which you describe. It shows that you have intensity of feeling,—that you are capable of great things. I like to hear a young man talk in that strain, for it is rare to find one nowadays who has heart and is not afraid of showing it."

Talbot felt that if he stayed a moment longer he would be sure to do or say something which would compel her to dash his hopes to the ground. And, as even the vaguest and absurdest kind of uncertainty was preferable to the pitiless certainty, he was unwilling to challenge the Fates. As he got up to take his leave he chanced to see his face in the mirror, and it gave him quite a shock. His cheeks and forehead were not scarlet, but almost purple, and his features had a look of excitement which suggested insanity. And opposite to him in the mirror stood she, placid as a goddess, and as unattainable. She was smiling affably,—a trifle condescendingly, he thought,—and it flashed through his mind that he was but one of a long procession of victims who had immolated themselves upon her altar. He was not the first, nor would he be the last. During that brief instant she appeared almost hateful to him, like a cruel, heartless Circe who sat with her placid smile feasting upon broken hearts. But when he bade her adieu, and held her hand in his, the warm thrill of her touch went rippling through his frame, and by the time he had reached the bottom of the stairs the vision of her incomparable loveliness rose again before his fancy, and he was ready to do penance in sackcloth and ashes for his disloyal thought.

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## CHAPTER V.

### SIR PERCY'S PICNIC.

SIR Percy, arrayed in drab from his hat to his gaiters, stood upon a box in the railroad dépôt, surveying his forces, like a field-marshal on the eve of a battle. He held in his hand a stout stick, with which he pointed energetically now in this direction, now in that, while he gave orders to a dozen liveried servants, who ran excitedly about carrying shawl-straps, hand-bags, and baskets of provisions. It was Sir Percy's habit to repay the hospitalities of which he had been the recip-



ient during the year by an annual picnic or excursion into the Sabine or Alban Mountains, to which all were invited who could make out a valid title to his acquaintance. On the present occasion there were about thirty-five or forty ladies and gentlemen of various nationalities who had been thus honored; and a confusion of French, Italian, and English exclamations were heard from the waiting-room, where they stood in scattered groups in the neighborhood of the doors, watching for the signal to embark. Among the first to step out upon the platform when the signal was given was Miss Douglas, escorted by Count de Saint-Réault, a curly-headed, fine-looking man, with a needle-pointed moustache and goatee. Although he was in civil attire, his bearing was distinctly military, and in his manner there was a certain exaggerated courtesy which is found nowhere outside of France. The count was taller and of larger build than the average of his countrymen; and his broad, masculine neck and small occiput showed a strain of English blood. He was gallantly stooping over Constance, or inclining his body toward her, while she spoke, and his expression and attitude betokened the liveliest admiration. Beyond doubt, there was also an unwonted animation in her features as she glanced up into the handsome officer's face and with light *persiflage* responded to his hyperbolic compliments. There was a dewy look in her eyes and a morning freshness in her whole appearance which were ravishing. With all her simplicity, you saw, if you were a connoisseur, that she was a consummate product of civilization. The broad-brimmed brown Gainsborough hat she wore, the fawn-colored sack which clung to her trim figure as if it were but a divestible epidermis, the inimitable perfection of arrangement and color in every detail of her attire, represented something unattainable except to a very select few whom ancestry and environment have favored. The other ladies, as they walked out upon the platform, ostensibly absorbed in the remarks of their masculine companions, were furtively taking notes on Miss Douglas's toilet and wondering how under the sun she could afford to dress like that.

It was a delightfully good-humored assemblage which gathered, under Sir Percy's auspices, in the railroad dépôt on that pleasant November morning. The majority had an agreeable sense of distinction at finding themselves in such a select company, and were content with the world, because they were content with themselves. The only ones who seemed unconscious of the honor which had been bestowed upon them, and for whose presence no one seemed able to account, were Cordelia Saunders and her cousin, Mr. Burroughs. Sir Percy, who had had his own reasons for inviting them, but nevertheless felt that they were a trifle out of place, took pains to explain to everybody that they were not friends of his, you know, but, being Americans, and rather clever people,—you know,—in fact, uncommonly clever, he had wished to be civil to them, just out of regard for Talbot, who was an uncommonly nice fellow,—you know,—and really quite clever,—in fact, uncommonly clever. Nor did Talbot, when he overheard one of these speeches, dare to utter the astonishment he felt, and far less to repudiate the friendship of his aggressive countrywoman. When the guard rang his bell and the well-dressed, well-groomed ladies and gentlemen



took their seats in the railroad-coupés, the young man managed, by a little innocent slyness, to become incarcerated in the same compartment with Mrs. and Miss Douglas and the dazzling Count de Saint-Réault. Although the latter's presence was not a source of unalloyed bliss, Talbot had arrived at that stage of infatuation when the tortures of jealousy seemed preferable to those of unsatisfied yearning. His face was bathed in happy blushes while he bowed to Mrs. Douglas and exchanged the frigid civilities of an introduction with the Frenchman. He had nothing in particular to say that seemed appropriate to the occasion, and therefore only smiled in amiable confusion and nestled in a corner of the sofa where he had Miss Constance's face in a good light. Her mother, who was a fussy little short-sighted woman, with unmistakable remnants of beauty, displeased him greatly by engaging him in conversation; and he only concluded to forgive her on the score of a relationship which seemed a claim to immortality. He had just resigned himself to cultivating the mother for the daughter's sake, when to his horror he saw that Miss Saunders had caught sight of him and was steering straight toward him.

"Look a-here, Georgie Talbot," she said, addressing him through the open window, "I don't think you are as smart as you think you are. If you want to run away from me, you have got to hide better than that. Mr. Percy said I was to look after you, you know, so that you don't get into mischief, and I mean to keep my eye on you, whether you like it or not."

She beckoned to the guard to open the door, and without the least ceremony seated herself at his side, opposite Mrs. Douglas. In the same moment the locomotive shrieked, and the train began slowly to crawl out of the dépôt. It was a special train, chartered for the occasion; and it was Sir Percy himself who, in token of his proprietorship, blew the whistle that set it in motion. Under cover of the noise, Talbot managed to curse his fate with sufficient virulence, without outwardly betraying his chagrin, and to make up his mind that it was his duty to introduce Miss Saunders, regardless of the consequences. As she was Sir Percy's guest, he had, of course, no choice but to treat her with distinguished consideration. He got through with the ceremony of introduction rather more creditably than he had expected, and watched admiringly the exquisite affability with which Constance received the brusque approaches of the Beautiful Heathen. The train was taking its time, winding slowly through the brown Campagna, dotted with the tall, ruined arches of the Claudian aqueduct, and the glorious tints of the Roman autumn absorbed the mind and the vision and made the conversation lag. It was Cordelia who first broke the silence, and in a manner which fairly made Talbot jump.

"I am real glad to know you, Miss Douglas," she said, in her abrupt fashion; "for, if you care to, I am sure you can be of great use to me in introducing the Emancipation Waist in this country."

"I shall be pleased if I can be of use to you," Constance answered, a little guardedly; "but what, pray, is the Emancipation Waist?"

"Why, you don't say you haven't heard about the Emancipation Waist? Well, I must say, this is a slow country. The papers have

been full of it for more than two years. I scarcely ever take up an American paper but I find a notice or an advertisement of the Emancipation Waist."

Constance now suddenly perceived that the article concerning which she had thoughtlessly inquired belonged to a part of the feminine toilet which it would be embarrassing to discuss in the presence of M. de Saint-Réault.

"It is the charm of this country to me that it is what you call slow-going," she said, in the hope of dismissing the Emancipation Waist: "I fear I am getting so acclimated to the Old World that I like it the better just because it is old."

"Well, I shouldn't wonder. Americans get awfully corrupted in these foreign parts," Cordelia declared, cheerfully. "I guess I should get corrupted myself, if I allowed myself to settle down in an old hole of a palace and forget my mission in life."

"Ah! mademoiselle has a mission," ejaculated M. de Saint-Réault, leaning forward with sudden interest. "It is permit to inquire what is ze caractere of ze mission of mademoiselle?"

Miss Saunders, who was inclined to take a supercilious view of all foreigners (she professed especially a hearty contempt for all that was French) gazed at the handsome Gaul for a moment in frank astonishment, as Balaam may have gazed at his ass when it opened its mouth and spake. She felt wofully tempted to mimic his manner of speech, and it cost her an effort to restrain herself. "Well," she answered, with a laugh, "the Emancipation Waist,—that is my mission."

She gave a little French twist to her last word, just to try if he would notice it; but apparently he was incapable of believing that she would make fun of him to his face.

"Ze Emancipation O'aist," he said, looking at Miss Douglas, as if in search of information: "zat is, I zink, you say—a papare—a newspaper."

"The Emancipation a newspaper!" cried Cordelia, with a hearty laugh: "oh, no, sir; it is an article of underwear for ladies."

"An article of underwear: vat is zat?" he inquired, appealing again to Constance with his expressive eyes.

"It is a garment, count," answered Mrs. Douglas in French, hastening to her daughter's rescue,—*"a garment like this."*

She made a descriptive gesture with both hands down her waist, which conveyed an approximate idea of what she meant.

"I zank you," said M. de Saint-Réault. "*Mais* a garment—'ow you mague zat a mission?"

"Well, that is what most people don't see," Cordelia replied, with eager promptness: "they don't see that the welfare of the race is at stake in it,—that the health and strength and happiness of unborn generations depend upon the dress reform to which I mean to devote my life. It is the question whether civilization is to survive or be wrecked by woman's fatal folly and man's crime in admiring and encouraging her folly."

She was quoting from the printed circular which she had composed,

explaining the disastrous effects of the female corset, proving that the corset-wearing nations were bound to succumb in the struggle for existence to the non-corset-wearing, and that, as the former were now the standard-bearers of civilization, the Emancipation Waist had really no less an object than the preservation of civilization.

"You know," she continued, earnestly, with a direct appeal to the count, "that the corset impedes the circulation of the blood and prevents you from taking a full, deep breath. It accordingly reduces your vitality some fifteen to twenty per cent. below par, according to the tightness with which you lace. And only think what that means! It is just that little margin which determines success or failure,—survival or non-survival. And, as you know, it is not only the present generation that suffers: the reduced vitality in three distinct ways affects the generation still unborn or about to be born. Women who lace during the child-bearing period rob their infants of the capital of life and strength which is their due. They bring a puny child into the world instead of a lusty one; a predestined failure instead of a predestined success; perhaps a vicious weakling, because vice is often but a form of disease——"

"Pardon me, Miss Saunders," Mrs. Douglas interrupted, anxious lest the lady's enthusiasm might carry her too far, "but if you would call upon us privately we should be happy to hear of your labors as a dress-reformer. Count de Saint-Réault, you know, is not married, and can scarcely do anything for your cause——"

"Indeed he can, madam," broke in the undaunted Cordelia. "If the count will promise me never to admire or make love to any woman who wears a corset, he will do more for my cause than a dozen editorials."

"Mademoiselle is vary polite," the count asserted, smiling. "But so many ozzers would mague love—zat is what you say?—to zose ladies, zay would not miss me."

"Then show your heroism by making love to those without corsets," cried Cordelia.

"Zat would be a test of my sincerity, *en vérité*," the Parisian responded, with the expressive national shoulder-shrug. "But, mademoiselle, I razzer do ze ozzers. I razzer not mague love."

"Well, you can have your choice. But, mind you, I am going to keep watch of you."

"You watch me? Vary well. But I am deeffecult to watch, mademoiselle, extremely deeffecult."

The magnificent ruin of *Sette Basse*, a villa which in imperial times must have seen some deep-hued Roman life, here attracted the attention of the travellers, and gave the conversation an archaeological turn. Cordelia said she guessed the Romans had a high old time, but asserted that in the matter of dress their women were far ahead of their modern sisters. Mrs. Douglas, fearing that this was introductory to another chapter on the Emancipation Waist, hastened to engage the count in an animated discussion concerning the comparative advantages of European and American life. In the mean while, the train rolled along at a leisurely rate over the Campagna, and shrieked a great deal

without visible provocation. The indefinable charm of this sombre historic plain, where the very grass under your feet sprouts with the rank life of the buried Cæsars, turned the minds of Sir Percy's guests into a lower and gentler key. Some lapsed into silence because it seemed a sacrilege to disturb such rich and mellow peace by shrill and irrelevant speech.

It was about eleven o'clock when the train began to climb the little declivity, overgrown with corn and olives, upon which Frascati is situated, and a few minutes later it steamed into the station. Sir Percy, blowing his whistle (though it was hard to tell why), ordered the doors to be opened, and the company gathered about him, expressing their delight at the weather, the railroad-journey, the views, and the perfection of his arrangements. And it was a fact that every possible want had been anticipated, and every contingency foreseen. Sir Percy was a master in his attention to detail, and had a well-earned reputation as an organizer of excursions. Twenty-five frowzy but safe-looking donkeys were in waiting, each labelled with the name of the lady for whom it was destined, and some of the excursionists who knew their host's peculiarities pretended to look also for labels indicating the gentlemen who were to be attached to each as entertainers and escorts. Being left to the caprice of natural selection, these creatures proceeded to illustrate that cruel and ungenerous law in strict accordance with Darwin. No less than six of them thronged about Miss Douglas, contending for the honor of assisting her into the saddle, while there was a corresponding number of ladies who had to depend upon the gallantry of the donkey-drivers. Sir Percy managed, however, by a few nods and becks and whispered directions to distribute the eager cavaliers, though in some cases not exactly to their satisfaction. M. de Saint-Réault, who was in this respect a radiant exception, was left in charge of Miss Douglas; but Talbot, whose feelings were ruthlessly trampled upon, found himself attached to Miss Saunders and her cousin Burroughs, both of whom were equally obnoxious to him. Two English secretaries of legation (one of whom had earned notoriety by being ejected from the Pope's reception on account of his refusal to kneel) were taken in tow by Miss Bush and Miss Bromfield, two Romanized American damsels who dabbled in the arts and excelled in fine talk. The famous German historian Montrovius, who looked like a bearded Apollo grown old, offered his distinguished company to Lady Mulgrave, who was lying with her yacht and her husband at Civita Vecchia, while Lord Mulgrave devoted himself to patronizing the novelist Mrs. Pearl Shinn, in whose career he promised to interest himself on her return to England. Sir Percy attached himself to no one, as his supervision was everywhere needed.

It was a pretty sight,—the long, many-colored procession climbing, single file, the steep slope that leads from the town to the Villa Aldobrandini, which Sir Percy had hired from Prince Borghese for the occasion. The skies overhead were radiantly blue at the zenith, but shaded downward into soft golden tints with hazy suggestions of Indian summer. There was a mellow autumnal tone in the sunshine, and the dense, dark masses of the stone-pines traced themselves in a golden



halo against the horizon. It seemed a glorious thing to live; and the brief space of years that has been granted us, midway between the thronging generations of the unborn and the dead, was a rich boon,—an unalloyed blessing. All the harassing cares which in the New World complicate the problem of existence, making us old before our time, seemed remoter than the age of the Pharaohs, and more unreal than the "Arabian Nights." The young girls laughed with hearty abandon as they rode past the sombre villas that brood over untold tragedies. Cordelia, after having exasperated Talbot by her puns and irreverent talk, broke off a twig of a young olive-tree and presented it to him with the request that he follow the example of Noah's dove.

"What did she do?" he asked, sullenly.

"She was gone for eight days," was the cheerful reply.

He was about to take the hint and seek more congenial company, but she peremptorily called him back.

"Look here, Georgie Talbot," she said, "I am aware you don't like me, but that doesn't trouble me a bit. I like you, and that's enough. You are a very nice boy, though you are not always well-behaved. Now, you are dying to tell me that you are in love with Miss Douglas, but you are a little bashful because Nat Burroughs is hanging about me.—Now, Nat, you trot on ahead while Georgie tells me all about his unhappy love-affair."

Burroughs, without deigning to reply, strolled off among the cypresses that skirted the road, and Talbot, hardly knowing what to answer, kicked the stones angrily out of the path, and felt inclined to follow his example.

"Why must you always treat me as if I were a child?" he asked, blushing to the tips of his ears.

"I surely don't treat you as a child when I ask you about your love-affairs."

"Yes, you do."

"Well, Georgie, you are a child. You are one of the most charmingly unsophisticated and inexperienced boys I have ever known. Any woman who thought it worth while could make you fall in love with her."

"Suppose you try."

"I? Why, my dear boy, I have other things to do. I am not here for sentimental purposes. And, if you'll excuse me, if I ever go hunting I shall go for bigger game."

"I like your insolence, at least."

"No, you don't. But you will by and by. You know, all my friends, and my enemies too, for that matter, make a point of telling me their love-affairs. It is my fate to be a depository and trust-company for other people's heart-secrets."

"I should think you would rebel."

"Oh, no; I rather like it. It is a diversion among my more serious pursuits. Do you know, I am very fond of gentlemen? I don't know what I should do without them. They are so nice and harmless and jolly, and then they dress so well. I assure you, I positively dote on them,—that is, of course, within their proper sphere."

Talbot had to laugh, in spite of his vexation, at this characterization of his sex, and he began to understand why Sir Percy found Cordelia such good company.

"You ought to tell that to Sir Percy," he said.

"Sir Percy? Oh, no! I am like Shakespeare in that respect,—I never repeat. But since you speak of Mr. Percy, isn't he a nice old gentleman? I should never have believed that I could like an Englishman so much."

"If he heard you call him an old gentleman it would be the end of his liking for you."

"Is that so? But he is as bald on the top of his head as a Limburger cheese."

"Hush! There he is."

Sir Percy, who was a famous pedestrian, came stalking along with an Alpen-stock in his hand, mopping his forehead with a large yellow silk handkerchief.

"Permit me—aw—to call your attention—aw—to this view," he exclaimed, sweeping with his stick the line of the horizon.

"Yes, it is very fine," answered Miss Saunders, indifferently.

"You observe—aw—the villa over there,—how grandly it—aw—rises against the sky?"

"Yes, quite grandly."

"That is the Villa Torlonia: rather bad style, you know. But—aw—any pile of masonry—aw—against such a background would—aw—be impressive."

"If I could live in a villa like that, I should want to live forever," remarked Talbot.

"You mean if you could have the choice of your companion for eternity," ejaculated Cordelia. "Now, Georgie, beware, or you'll let the cat out of the bag before you know it.—Do you know, Mr. Percy," she went on, turning to the baronet, "this foolish boy has been falling in love, and he tells me he is going to jump from the dome of St. Peter's if the lady refuses him?"

"Why, my dear fellow?" cried Sir Percy, in genuine alarm. "I hope you are not serious?"

"Miss Saunders is romancing, Sir Percy," said Talbot, quietly. "She has been trying to extract a confession from me which I have declined to make."

"Oh, I shall have it yet," said Cordelia, laughing.

Half an hour's ride over stony paths, under the crowns of ilexes and olive-trees, brought the merry procession to the gate of the Villa Aldobrandini, which swung open upon its grating hinges to receive them. The villa, whose beauty consists more in its size than its architectural design, rises magnificently from a succession of terraces against a background of ilex and sombre-hued shrubbery, its great, dingy, weather-beaten front looking down upon a riotous wilderness of vegetation. There are stately ilex avenues, choked up with weeds and ending in a jungle of tangled vines; there are long, humid tunnels under the terraces, where green and brown lizards slip over the dilapidated pavement; there are ridiculous rococo statues of wood and marble, the

former fast decaying, the latter reclaimed by Nature, who has kindly clothed them in garments of green; there is an artificial cataract, descending in a series of cascades from one mossy stone basin into another, and filling the air with its gentle, unceasing murmur; there are damp, dusky arbors with marble seats, cracked and weather-stained, whose dense, inscrutable privacy is haunted with the amorous whispers of stately ecclesiastical ghosts. But, in spite of neglect and decay and the fantastic rococo taste which everywhere crops out, there is an indescribable grandeur over it all,—an august historic air, as if each century that passed over the palace had left its dark deposits of human experience for you to decipher.

After having dismounted from the donkeys, Sir Percy's guests scattered through the spacious halls of the villa, which gave an uncomfortable resonance to their voices and steps, inspected the conventional mythological frescos of Cav' d'Arpino, and speculated upon the character of the people and the life which these lofty walls once enclosed.

"They lived spaciouly, those ecclesiastical princes of the Renaissance," remarked Talbot, who had managed to constitute himself Miss Douglas's cicerone through the villa. "Oh, how I envy them,—those fine, cynical, unscrupulous epicures!"

"And why do you envy them?" she asked, marvelling a little at the ardor of his speech.

"Oh," he exclaimed, tossing his head recklessly, "I envy them because they had red blood in their veins and were not afraid if the world knew it. They lived in a dagger-and-poison atmosphere, and carried gayly their lives in their hands, armed to the teeth for defence and offence,—beautiful, sleek, dangerous beasts of prey, with velvet paws; graceful and polished; delighting with an exquisite delight in art and poetry; connoisseurs and patrons of sculptors, painters, and archaeologists; splendid, warm-blooded personages, that moved through life with pomp and circumstance and left long shining trails behind them."

Constance, perceiving the daring light in the young artist's eyes as he spoke, grew a trifle uneasy. She had never suspected such a positive personality in this small and rather dainty man, whose adoration of her she had been at pains to repress. She liked well enough to have him adore her, but it must be respectfully and discreetly, and without annoying demonstrations. She wished now that somebody would come and relieve her of the necessity of keeping him within bounds.

"I don't envy those unscrupulous prelates," she said, rather aimlessly: "I should have been afraid of them."

"So should I, perhaps," Talbot exclaimed, eagerly; "but I should have enjoyed being afraid of them. Can't you see them sit out on the balcony there, around that cracked marble table, sipping their wine, and discussing, with bright predatory smiles, their villanous ecclesiastical politics, through which ran the unscrupulous love-intrigue like a red thread gleaming, by chance, through the tangle of silver and gold? They ruled the world, those cunning scarlet-robed princes of the Church.

What wonder that (bachelors though they were) they required palaces covering a couple of acres to shelter their comprehensive households, and small armies of attendants to minister to their complicated wants? One cannot help respecting a man who stalks into life with such magnificent demands. And what wretched little insignificant pygmies are we not, compared with them, content, as we are, if we can only gain a tolerable livelihood and sneak through existence without harming anybody or being harmed!"

Miss Douglas gazed up at the walls of the stately apartment—the *appartamento nobile* of the villa—in which they were standing, and suddenly discovered in Talbot's words the most illuminative commentary. She forgot her anxiety and began to enjoy his impulsive eloquence. The villa acquired a definite and highly enjoyable character to her, and her fine eyes lighted up with an unwonted animation.

"Why, Mr. Talbot," she ejaculated, "I can't believe you are an American. Don't you know all that is the rankest heresy in our great republic?"

"Oh, yes, I know it! I know it! But, Miss Douglas, you would scarcely believe it, but I have a grudge against Fate,—or rather a hundred thousand grudges. It was first a cruel joke to make a man like me an American; then I ought to have been born in the sixteenth century instead of the nineteenth. Oh, how I hate this pale, well-bred, self-restrained age! I should have been content to wake up some fine morning with a dagger in my throat, if I only could have *lived* before dying. Now I shall go to my grave a miserable, virtuous, self-restrained dauber, and no one will ever suspect how red the blood was that ran in my veins."

"It will be your own fault if you do not show us," Constance remarked, unguardedly, and she repented of her words before they were out of her mouth.

"Ah, no, Miss Douglas, it will be your fault," he murmured, in a low voice, through which the deep passion trembled: "you know you can do with me what you like. Since I have seen you, I revolve like a helpless satellite about you and receive only my light and life from your countenance."

There was a touching humility and fervor in his voice which suddenly brought the tears into Constance's eyes. She pitied him so profoundly, and yet could never think of giving her own stately and complex self into his keeping.

"Mr. Talbot," she said, with a sweet kindliness which struck a chill to her adorer's heart, "I am sorry that you should entertain this sort of feeling for me, and I pray you to do what you can to rid yourself of it. You know I am older than you, and that in itself ought to be enough to put all such thoughts out of your head."

"And you are taller than I am, and prouder than I am, and richer than I am," Talbot muttered, smiling bitterly; "but I cannot help loving you, any more than I can help breathing. You may think that it is mere wild foolish talk, when I say that I should die if I were to be deprived of the sight of you. But I feel it in the bottom of my soul that life is impossible to me, away from you."



They had been alone for some time in the vast room, the rest of the company having ascended to the upper floors. But now suddenly a door opened immediately in front of the young lady, and she found herself face to face with Nathaniel Burroughs. He remained standing on the threshold, staring at her with a strange, fixed gaze.

"I was looking for Delia," he said, dismally.

"I don't know her," answered Constance, to whom the remark apparently had been addressed.

"I saw you talking with her in the cars," Burroughs insisted.

"Oh, you mean Miss Saunders, perhaps. I have not seen her recently."

There was a tone of dismissal in the words, but Burroughs's ears were not trained to interpret fleeting intonations. He continued to stare at Constance, as if he had something to say to her, but did not know how to say it. Talbot, who saw in his conduct mere rude importunity, was determined not to come to his assistance, and after an awkward pause of two or three minutes, during which he had made a pretence of studying the frescos, Cordelia's cousin sauntered away through the resonant corridors, looking back over his shoulder with a gaze full of distress and vague agitation. He was scarcely beyond earshot, when Constance turned to Talbot, and in a troubled voice asked,—

"Who is that terrible man?"

"He is a recent convert to Catholicism, and cousin to the Emancipation Waist," replied Talbot, dryly.

"But what an extraordinary face he has!"

"Do you find it extraordinary? I find it only vulgar."

"No, it is crude, but not vulgar. But those eyes,—there is a world of trouble in them."

"Yes, his lack of breeding is sure to give him trouble."

"No, Mr. Talbot, lack of breeding does not give that kind of trouble."

"Perhaps."

"That man has suffered."

"Very likely. Some Indiana girl may have jilted him. I don't blame her if she did."

"Well, I do. But I will not say anything more about him, since I see you dislike him."

They moved through the corridor toward the great outside *portone* as they spoke, and met Sir Percy, Herr Montrovius, and Mrs. Pearl Shinn descending with loud-voiced speech and laughter from the floor above. Count de Saint-Réault was acting as escort to the archæological Miss Bush, who was gotten up like a pre-Raphaelite saint and turned her spiritual face up to him with an air which was quite devotional. The count, on the other hand, walked superbly erect, and did not bend over her with that air of gallant solicitude which he always exhibited toward Constance. The moment the latter came into view he excused himself from Miss Bush, who blushed excitedly, as he made her his grand obeisance; but she could not help remarking the striking change in his manner as he approached Miss Douglas, and drawing her inferences accordingly. Democratic though she was (or imagined that she

was), she scarcely regarded her small and vivacious countryman Talbot, who made haste to join her, as a substitute for so magnificent a personage as the Count de Saint-Réault.

"Ah, mademoiselle," exclaimed the count, with a delightful sense of relief, in his native tongue, "I have been hungering and thirsting for your presence like a traveller in the desert."

"M. le Comte," answered Constance, with her sweet, tranquil smile, "that means in English, I am glad to see you."

"No, mademoiselle, it means more. It means I am enchanted—I am enraptured to see you. I can see and I care to see nothing but you."

"That is very delightful, count, that I am so essential to your well-being. But perhaps you will pardon me if I do not entirely reciprocate your sentiments. I have also an ambition to explore this charming old villa, and, if you will join me, we will take a walk in the gardens."

"You make me very happy, mademoiselle."

"You are extremely amiable, count."

This was the style of conversation which had been habitual between these two during the year of their acquaintance. They talked lightly, skimming over the surface of things, and never touching upon deeper topics. It was quite improper, according to the count's creed, to talk seriously with women. He always paid Constance the most extravagant compliments, and she, strange to say, did not resent them. The man was such an embodiment of good breeding—so distinctly the result of a high civilization, and one wholly different from the one from which she had sprung—that she found herself admiring when she might have been expected to criticise. In the first place, his wholly chivalrous attitude toward her sex pleased her, and, in the second place, she was not above being impressed by his rank, and the mysteriousness of the diplomatic mission with which he was confidently credited. He had the courage to remain faithful to the *ancien régime*, which in those days was identified with the name of the Count de Chambord, and to forego all chances of preferment in the army rather than ingratiate himself with the authorities of the republic. It was understood that his labors in Rome, of whatever nature they were, were in the interest of the Bourbon cause. There was in all this something which appealed to her sense of romance and invested the count with a kind of poetic halo. She was by no means wildly in love with him,—chiefly, she reasoned, because it was not in her nature to be wildly anything. Her temperament and character lay along the middle octaves, in which there was a wealth of sweet and tranquil melody, but did not range high into the treble or deep into the base. That was, at all events, the analysis of those who knew her best.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A DÉJEÛNER À LA FOURCHETTE.

THE gardens of the Villa Aldobrandini are large enough to afford privacy for an army of lovers. Talbot walked about as in a dream

(though by no means a happy one) and imagined that he had strolled unawares into a chapter of Boccaccio's Decameron. Only he had, somehow, got himself entangled with the wrong lady and was powerless to rectify the mistake. Miss Bush found him extremely unresponsive to her fine speeches and pre-Raphaelite attitudes, and her hushed and gentle voice wasted itself in unappreciated efforts. It is a fact that a fine talker never likes to meet another of his own species, which circumstance may account for the young man's suppressed irritability and the mute maledictions which he hurled against the smiling sky. It cheapened horribly his outburst about the Renaissance ecclesiastics to think that this thin, ridiculous girl had hit upon something that sounded quite similar. He found her affected, and she found him disagreeable; but they clung to each other for about half an hour, exploring arbors whose delightful privacy invited quite different sentiments, losing themselves in luxuriant jungles of vines and shrubbery, and viewing from the broad terraces the glorious panorama of the Sabine Mountains bathed in golden light, the dark and silent Campagna, and in the distance the flashing domes of the Eternal City. Miss Bush had just delivered a neat little rhapsody on the mellow richness of the Italian sunlight, and had succeeded in exasperating her companion until he felt as if he could strangle her, when, to their unutterable astonishment, they surprised Sir Percy and Miss Saunders in an interesting *tête-à-tête*. The baronet was seated on the edge of a cracked marble basin, in the middle of which a moss-grown Triton vainly inflated his cheeks, and Cordelia, who had apparently been sitting at his side, had risen, and was standing in front of him with an expression on her face which seemed a mixture of annoyance and embarrassment. She was frankly delighted at the sight of Talbot and Miss Bush, and started toward them with an eagerness which took small account of etiquette.

"Now, Georgie," she cried, with a sudden relaxation of her seriousness, "this will never do. What do you mean by going back on me in this style? And me looking for you high and low while you go off flirting with another girl?"

If she could have known how distasteful this style of banter was to him, how in the present moment he positively writhed under it, she would perhaps have had pity on him. But it was not her habit to trouble herself about the sentiments of her victims.

"I always knew you were a heartless flirt, Georgie," she went on, mercilessly, "and of course I ought to have expected that you would trifle with my affections. But this poor, unguarded creature here,—I couldn't defend it before my own conscience if I didn't warn her and let her know what sort of man you are."

Miss Cordelia pronounced this serious indictment with a smiling face and a light and breezy manner which puzzled Miss Bush and Sir Percy exceedingly. They were both too unacquainted with our Western humor to understand that this was meant as *badinage* and had no serious import whatever. The situation was getting absolutely unbearable, when Miss Bush unexpectedly recovered her dignity, and said, with a constrained laugh,—

"Oh, thank you very much, Miss Saunders, but your warning, I assure you, is quite superfluous."

"Why, Talbot," observed Sir Percy, also with an air of constraint, and wiped his forehead energetically, "who would have thought—aw—who would have fancied—don't you know—that you were such a gay Lothario?"

"Good gracious, Mr. Percy!" Cordelia burst out, with a laugh which rang with sharp reverberation against the walls of the villa,—  
"why, you English people, you are awfully funny."

"Well," rejoined Sir Percy, with a visible effort to appear at his ease, "that is exactly—aw—that is—don't you know?—what we think of you. You are, as you might say, quite too awfully funny."

"And you think I am serious in hauling Talbot over the coals for jilting me?"

"Well, really, you know—aw—it is hard to know when Americans are serious and when they are not. They do things, you know, that we would never think of doing."

Sir Percy appealed confidently to Miss Bush for confirmation of this judgment, quite forgetting that she was herself an American, though a Europeanized one.

"I have been so long away from America, you know," she responded, with embarrassment; "so I really couldn't tell."

"On general principles," affirmed Cordelia, with a fresh burst of hilarity, "you may take it for granted that we are never serious. A real American—that is, I mean, a Western American—would joke at his mother-in-law's funeral."

"Now, really, you don't say so!" exclaimed Sir Percy, guilelessly,—at which Cordelia was so overcome with laughter that she came within an ace of seating herself in his lap. Whether he objected to such familiarity or became suddenly conscious of his duties to the rest of the company is difficult to conjecture; but he arose with some abruptness, shook the legs of his trousers, and remarked,—

"You will excuse me, ladies; it is time for me to stir up the servants, as—aw—they are capable of forgetting that luncheon is to be served at one."

He lifted his hat, and descended the long flight of slippery green stairs along the artificial water-fall.

"I suppose," observed Talbot, glancing at Miss Bush, "that it is in order for us to follow. But take care; the stairs are very slippery. You had better take my arm."

His animosity to Cordelia had changed his feeling for Miss Bush to one of comparative cordiality. He now found her clear-cut, saintly face, set in its frame of pale-golden hair, quite pictorially effective. She seemed herself conscious of a certain Old-English quaintness in her wistful gaze and willowy slenderness; for she dressed like one of Rossetti's or Burne-Jones's allegorical maidens who sit under apple-trees, or walk symbolically up- or down-stairs, or merely stand in "stained-glass attitudes" against a golden background.

At one o'clock a melodious bugle-call summoned the company to luncheon in the great dining-hall of the villa. Sir Percy had discov-



ered that there was a mediæval precedent for this picturesque performance; but, whether there was or not, it imparted a flavor of old-time romance to the feast which was relished by all. It had been determined for sanitary reasons to serve the luncheon in-doors, as the lateness of the season made a *fête champêtre* a little hazardous. Ponderous oaken chairs, superbly carved, but of defective upholstery, had been gathered together from all the rooms of the villa, and a miscellaneous assortment of settees, stands, *tête-à-têtes*, and tables, some straight-legged and classical, some spindle-legged and frivolous *à la Pompadour*, gave one, at first sight, the impression that there was going to be an auction of furniture. To remove the sepulchral chill which is apt to strike one on entering the vast, resonant apartments of an Italian villa, Sir Percy had ordered a fire of logs to be laid on the long-unused hearth; and the flames, as they leaped up the wide-throated chimney, flashed and danced in the polished surfaces of precious glass and silver. Great banks of white, red, and yellow roses in dishes of Venetian glass adorned the table and filled the room with a delicate fragrance. Cardinal Aldobrandini's ghost, if it were permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon, would have wondered what the world was coming to.

As it was to be a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, consisting of cold dishes, the gentlemen made haste to capture tables and chairs and to dispose themselves in congenial groups with the ladies whom policy or inclination recommended to their attention. Miss Douglas had found her place in a rococo *tête-à-tête* with tarnished gilding and upholstered in ancient embroidered brocade; and facing her, on the other side, sat Count de Saint-Réault, bending forward in an attitude of respectful expectancy, and receiving every word that she uttered as if it were a marvel of wisdom and brilliancy. If he had been less robust and masculine, this seeming humility in the presence of a beautiful woman would not have recommended him to Miss Constance's favor; but in one so well-born and dignified it appeared to her almost touching. She had never in her life received homage that seemed so delicate, so unobtrusive, and so thoroughly acceptable.

There was a small army of waiters, and the gentlemen were not required to make foraging expeditions in search of oysters or lobster salad or ice-cream. Every want was promptly discovered by the vigilant servitors, and gratified before it was uttered. It was Sir Percy's pride that his servants were better trained than any in England. And he carried his entire household with him wherever he went, ostensibly for the reason that he could not put up with the impudence and inefficiency of foreign servants.

The champagne-corks gave a resonance like pistol-shots under the wide ceiling, and even innocent sherry-bottles seemed determined to rival them in noise. There was a lively clinking of glasses, animated conversation, accented by occasional little screams of laughter, and a subdued clatter of knives and forks through the spacious refectory. All was so harmonious, so civilized. And yet there was one jarring note; but there was no one who discovered it except Constance. While she sat exchanging winged platitudes with the count, uttered with a charming subdued vivacity, she was conscious of a pair of eyes resting

upon her with earnest intentness. She did not know at first to whom this gaze belonged, but a vague uneasiness took possession of her: she felt as if some strange cobwebby substance were closing about her, and finally she felt compelled to turn around.

"Might I trouble you to face the other way, count?" she said: "the light troubles me a little."

"Ah, mademoiselle, I am entirely at your service," responded the Frenchman, rising, and wheeling the *tête-à-tête* about; "though you will pardon me for saying that you are not one of those ladies who need fear the light."

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte, but I court it no longer. To a complexion past twenty, the sunlight is always trying."

"Yours, if you will permit me to make so personal a remark, could triumphantly challenge the sun, the moon, and all the stars together."

It would have been impossible to Constance to account for the fact that this airy gallantry, which she had always received and found to be quite in order, suddenly jarred on her. It seemed just a trifle stale and artificial. She presently associated her curious change of feeling with the discovery that it was her recent antipathy, Nathaniel Burroughs, whose grave, dark-brown gaze had penetrated her consciousness through the back of her head. He was standing leaning up against the wall, with a plate in his hand, upon which there was a slice of bread and a piece of cheese. He looked inexpressibly forlorn and deserted, and yet not an object of pity; for the glance which now and then he let range over the company was full of scorn and disgust. His ragged black beard, which was bleached to a reddish brown at the ends and bristled toward all the points of the compass, seemed a declaration of war against the over-refinement expressed in the studied *coiffures* and careful toilets of these sons and daughters of an effete civilization. His ill-cut clothes of rusty broadcloth were also so defiantly unfashionable as to have the force of a sermon. And yet the man was not without lacking in dignity; for there was something in the tremendous earnestness of his face—a complete forgetfulness of self, perhaps—which made the rudeness of his manner not only pardonable but impressive. "I fear," said Constance, when she had for fifteen minutes vainly endeavored to shake off the discomfort which Burroughs's gaze caused her, "that I was very rude to that strange man who stands there under the dancing Flora. Perhaps you would have the kindness, count, to bring him up to me, so that I may make amends for my delinquencies."

The count, as one who cheerfully gives out of his abundance, rose with alacrity and hastened toward the gaunt Westerner. He felt himself so secure in Constance's favor that he could afford to be generous and give a hungry beggar a chance to pick up a few crumbs from his table. It was interesting to observe the bow of extreme courtesy with which he introduced himself to Burroughs and delivered in defective English his message. "Mademoiselle Douglas," he said, with his well-bred, conventional smile, "she desi-are ze plaisir of Monsieur Burroughs companee for one moment. She send me to prefare ze request that Monsieur Burroughs confare upon her ze conversation of one moment."

There flashed into Burroughs's eyes a frank astonishment, as of one who gazes upon a new zoological specimen; but it was but a momentary gleam, which presently gave way to his wonted seriousness.

"Tell her that I will come," he answered, without responding to any of the Frenchman's polite overtures.

"*Barbare!*" murmured the latter under his breath, as, after a second bow, he returned to render an account of his mission.

"But, mademoiselle," he said, in a tone of kindly remonstrance, relapsing with delightful ease into his mother-tongue, "you have a too good heart. That man, mademoiselle, is lonely because he deserves to be lonely. He is a son of the prairie. He is too uncivilized for any one to endure his company."

"Perhaps; but it does one good occasionally," Constance answered, "to come in contact with nature. I have a suspicion, sometimes, that we are very heartless in our judgments, we who call ourselves civilized. Is it not shallow to judge a man by the cut of his coat only, or the cut of his beard, or the cut of his manners?"

"*Mais le style, c'est l'homme!*" the count exclaimed, with unexpected animation: "the manner is the man!"

"Not always," she replied, sweetly: "I have known men whose manners misrepresented them."

"And I," he promptly rejoined, "have known one woman whose manner was so enchanting that I hope it does not misrepresent her."

Burroughs had, in the mean while, put away his plate, and his tall, gaunt figure was seen approaching.

"I know he is your countryman," said the Gaul, contemplating him with a superb disdain; "but tell me, what do you think he looks like?"

"I imagine he looks a trifle like St. John the Baptist. I could imagine him crying very impressively in the wilderness."

"Perhaps; but to me he looks like an orang-outang in broad-cloth."

"Ah, you are very cruel."

"You are disrespectful to the saint."

"And you are disrespectful to the orang-outang."

"Ah, there! you are more cruel than I," cried the count, with an amused laugh. "I implied that the saint might not be flattered by the comparison; but you even insinuate that it would be uncomplimentary to the ape."

Constance, who had intended to say something quite different from what she did, became a trifle confused, and began to pick at the salad on her plate to hide her blushes. She presently handed it to the count, who again passed it to a waiter. At this moment Burroughs presented himself, and at her request dropped into the seat in the *elle-à-elle* just vacated by the count. The latter, whom the unintentional joke had put in excellent humor, sent her a parting glance full of cheerful confidence and worshipful homage.

"I have not had the pleasure of an introduction to you, Mr. Burroughs," she began, in her gentle voice, and with a manner which was music and fragrance and all that is fair and sweet in superlative per-

fection, "but I took the liberty of sending for you, because I feared that at our meeting an hour ago I had unintentionally offended you."

The exquisite consideration implied in this speech did not fail of its effect upon Burroughs; and he was about to reply in a conciliatory tone, when suddenly his conscience smote him, and he remembered how the devil came to St. Anthony in the shape of a beautiful woman. Refinement, culture, all that makes life fair and agreeable, were to him snares of the Evil One, invented for the purpose of entrapping the unwary soul to eternal perdition.

"Madam," he said, fixing his great, earnest eyes upon her, so that there was no escape from them, "it don't make no difference."

"It may not matter to you," she answered, with the same sweet directness, "but to me it matters much if I have hurt any one's feelings."

"As long as you have not hurt their immortal souls, it is of no consequence."

His voice, which was deep and sonorous, vibrated through her, and a light shiver ran through her frame.

"Permit me to differ with you," she said, with animation. "I do not flatter myself that I have it in my power to hurt anybody's soul; but many heart-burnings and much misery could be avoided if men and women in daily intercourse were more considerate of each other's feelings."

He moved suddenly to the edge of the *little-à-little*, whose insidious softness probably suggested some connection with the arch-enemy, and sat for a moment in silence.

"Madam," he asked, abruptly, and with the same penetrating earnestness, "what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

"But no man need lose his soul by being polite."

"The world is rotten," he went on, after another pause, "and rotten things sometimes shine in the dark. What you call politeness is the shine of the world's rottenness in the darkness of spiritual death."

"Ah, you are quite a pessimist," she ejaculated, with forced lightness, but a kind of internal tremulousness which she found it hard to control threatened every minute to betray itself in her voice.

"I don't know what that is," he replied, bluntly. "I am a Christian, and don't want to be nothing else."

There was a visible effort to speak correctly in all he said, and a consequent suggestion that grammatical speech did not come naturally to him. He lapsed into the double negative, and sometimes repeated himself to correct it.

There was another pause, during which she again felt her interlocutor's eyes resting upon her. Their expression was, at first, one of solemn scrutiny, which gradually changed into interest and gloomy satisfaction.

"I hear you have come to Rome to be consecrated for the priesthood," she said, in order to break the uncomfortable spell.

"Yes," he answered; "but I am unworthy, and I hesitate."

"I suppose you intend to return to the United States to preach?"



"I don't know. First I intend to find peace."

There was something desperately restless and struggling in the glance he sent her, and she felt a curious stirring of sympathy within her. She began to find Nathaniel Burroughs interesting.

"And you think peace is to be found in Rome?" she said, with a vague smile.

"There is no peace in Satan's clutches," he burst out, vehemently. "I am struggling to get out of them. That's why I came to Rome."

She was at a loss to know what to answer to such a speech. No one had ever addressed her in such a tone before. The picture of Burroughs struggling in Satan's clutches rose with painful vividness in her fancy, and she looked helplessly about the room, in the hope that some one would come to his rescue. She, too, was getting into deep waters, and, although she had a dim desire to drift on with the current, she did not trust her skill as a swimmer. As it happened, Cordelia, who had grown tired of the secretary of the English Legation, had risen unceremoniously and was looking about for a more agreeable companion. Meeting Constance's wandering gaze, she interpreted it to mean that her cousin was boring her, and resolved to take pity on her affliction. With the cheeriest kind of nod to the astounded secretary, she turned her back on him and walked to the window where Burroughs sat staring at the floor and cracking his finger-joints in agitated silence.

"Well, I do declare, you seem to be having a jolly time!" she exclaimed. "I suppose Nat has been telling you what a bad lot he was before he got religion. You mustn't mind that, you know. He regards it, on the whole, as a recommendation."

"Delia," began Burroughs, with terrible gravity, and struggling to control his wrath, "if God did not help me, I am afraid—I am afraid I might some day do you harm."

It was curious talk, this, in the midst of a gay Renaissance banquetting-hall, resounding with clinking of glasses and merry jests and laughter. Constance was beginning to feel extremely uncomfortable, and yet from a vague sympathy for Burroughs could not abandon him to the tender mercies of his uncongenial cousin.

"Nat," the fair pagan cried, wholly unaffected by his anger, "you know perfectly well you are romancing. You know perfectly well that you never were as bad as you say you are."

"I have never been as bad as you and brazenly bragged of my unbelief," he replied, with low, tremulous voice.

"Well, isn't that exactly what I am saying? You have never been as bad as I, and I, as every one will admit, am a very nice girl, and have never in my life done anything of which I am ashamed."

"Oh, it is useless to talk to you," he sighed, shaking his head. "Unless God works a miracle, you are lost,—eternally lost."

"We'll settle all that when we get home, Nat; but it doesn't interest Miss Douglas, and if you want to make yourself charming to the ladies, you know, you have got to hit upon some lighter topic than hell,—something more agreeable than damnation."

"It is my fault, not his," Constance interposed. "It was I sought his acquaintance, not he mine."

"Well, you'll know better next time," said Miss Saunders, laughing. "Unless you are curious about the state of affairs in the infernal regions, you had better let him alone. It is a fact, though, that in infernal affairs he is very much at home."

Two waiters here approached, one with a tray upon which stood a dozen glasses, and the other carrying a champagne-cooler.

"Roederer or Veuve Cliquot?" he asked.

"Cliquot," answered Constance.

"I don't know the difference," exclaimed Delia, with a bewitching glance at the waiter, when the question was repeated to her.

"Sec or sweet?" explained that imperturbable functionary.

"That is all Greek to me, you know," she laughed, appealing again to the red-whiskered Ganymede. "But I suppose it is safe to take the same as Miss Douglas."

She seized the glass as soon as it was filled, nodded gayly to Burroughs and Constance, and was about to drink, when suddenly a new thought struck her.

"Oh, I forgot! Champagne is liquor, isn't it? I signed the pledge last year. I must not drink."

"What kind of pledge was that?" asked Constance.

"A temperance pledge. You know the woman's-suffrage committee in our State was in need of a temperance lecturer, and they urged me to go on the platform. I had to sign the pledge; but it was only whiskey I was thinking about at that time. I never thought of champagne. And it is not a great hardship for me to refrain from drinking whiskey."

When the tray was presented to Burroughs, his face grew very red, and the veins upon his forehead swelled. He sniffed for a moment the sweet fumes of the wine, and his hand shook as he raised it to seize the filled glass.

"Look here, Nat," said Delia, with quiet remonstrance, laying her hand upon his arm: "I wouldn't, if I were you."

He withdrew his hand, and, with a strange nervous restlessness, ran his fingers through his hair. Then he rose abruptly, and, without looking at the ladies, walked with long strides toward the door and disappeared. Constance, as if unable to comprehend the meaning of what had happened, glanced questioningly at Cordelia, who instantly flung herself into the seat he had vacated.

"He used once to be a hard drinker," she said, with unwonted seriousness.

"Indeed!"

"He was clerk in Judson's hat-store then, and he lost his place because he got drunk."

"How very sad!"

"Then he got religion very hard,—the fact is, he takes everything hard,—and they say he was a powerful exhorter."

"What is that?"

"Why, don't you know, he went to camp-meetings and revivals, and got people to confess their sins and join the church."

"Oh, I see."

"Then he became superintendent of the Sunday-school, and some well-to-do people in town clubbed together and sent him to the Methodist Theological Seminary. But there was no sort of moderation in him. He was so tremendously in earnest that he nearly broke up the institution."

"How very extraordinary!"

"Oh, no, it isn't so extraordinary as you might think. You know there isn't a spark of fun in him of any sort. He never knows when he is making a fool of himself. Once he gave away his coat and vest to a beggar on a cold winter day, and came walking into the seminary with nothing but his shirt and pants on. He had discovered that the Bible commanded him to do so. His shoes and stockings he was continually giving away. He was forever boiling and fuming inside about something or other, always in a mental turmoil, always tormenting himself about something which was of no earthly consequence. At last a Catholic priest got hold of him; and I don't think the Methodists regretted losing him. Since he became a Catholic he is much more rational. The priest convinced him that all the things he worried about were no concern of his,—that the Church had settled all those things for him, and that his only business was to obey. I wouldn't agree to that sort of thing myself, but for a fellow like Nat I think it is a good thing."

From having been biographical, Delia presently became autobiographical, and related some curious chapters of her own early life. She treated herself with great humor, as if she were another person, for whose doings she was in no wise responsible. She was a graduate of Oberlin, it appeared,—a veritable A.B.,—and had obtained an honorary A.M. She had been engaged half a dozen times while she was at college, and thought it was a useful experience, as it had given her great self-confidence and a healthy contempt for men. Her novel and amusing expressions and her reckless unconventionality impressed Constance, and inclined her to the opinion that at the bottom of her nature there was something stanch and genuine, but that, from a spirit of rebellion, she took pleasure in representing herself in an unfavorable light.

The sun-flushed mist that hung over the Campagna shone with a deeper gold, and the tall stone-pines looked blacker against the radiant west, when the heavy doors of the banqueting-hall were thrown open, and the company moved, with airy chatter, rustling of skirts, and crackling of shirt-bosoms, toward the upper terrace. The count, to whom his leave of absence had appeared long, presented himself again with the elaborate courtesy of his race, and conducted both ladies out into the open air. There Sir Percy, a little bit flushed with wine, was expatiating upon the beauty of the scenery, and was comparing it with Hong-Kong, Himalaya, and all sorts of outlandish places. He addressed himself directly to Cordelia, who, after having listened for a while, declared that she couldn't agree with him.

"The last time I was in the Himalayas," she said, "I didn't find it a bit like this; and as for Hong-Kong, there were so many heathen Chinese there that they spoiled the landscape for me. Now, I think

if this reminds me of anything, it is the plains of Benares or the steppes of Kamchatka."

It was fortunate for her that Sir Percy did not perceive that she was making sport of him; but Constance understood it, and marvelled at her audacity.

It is very hard to talk interestingly about a landscape, even if it be ever so beautiful; and there was a sense of relief visible on the part of both ladies and gentlemen when the tribute of admiration had been paid and it argued no impropriety to relapse into personalities. Constance allowed herself to be carried off unresistingly by the count, who, in response to a random remark of hers about the rank luxuriousness of vegetation in the lower garden, offered to conduct her thither. In order to get there they were obliged to descend a pair of slippery stairs, overgrown with rock-weed, and to penetrate a long, dark tunnel, in which burned but a single dim lamp before a shrine of the Madonna. A damp and muggy smell struck against them, like something tangible, as they plunged into the chilly dusk, and Constance drew her shawl shudderingly about her. She would never have allowed herself to be beguiled into such an expedition if she had had the full command of her will-power and had known the nature of the undertaking. But since Burroughs had left her she found herself in a curiously lethargic and semi-comatose condition. It did not seem to matter in the least what she did, or what was done with her. The count's compliments, which she had hitherto received with smiling satisfaction, appeared now vapid and meaningless, and the whole personality of her favored admirer had undergone a similar change. There was something futile and trivial and hollow about them which she had never before been aware of. The terrible words, "There is no peace in Satan's clutches," rang in her ears, and, strive as she might, she could not get rid of them. She surprised herself by walking to their rhythm, and even her breath in some mysterious way kept time with them. She was not exactly afraid of Satan's clutches for herself; but there was something violent and wholly unaccustomed in the rude vigor of the idea which they presented, something entirely out of tune with her whole being. Her life had been like a soft, sweet melody, in which there had been scarcely a jarring note. But here was a strident discord, which shrieked and shrieked and shivered the harmonies into splinters: "There is no peace in Satan's clutches."

What had she to do with Satan's clutches, she who had embroidered an altar-cloth for the Rev. Mr. Norman's church in the Via Nazionale, and had never neglected to make her obeisances to God whenever His name was mentioned? It was very annoying that this absurd phrase kept importuning her and could not be gotten rid of. She began to fear that she would lose control of herself unless something occurred to change the drift of her thought. She clung to the count's arm with an energy which he was in danger of misinterpreting. But something like a vague, pleading murmur, infinitely sad and touching, haunted her ears, and sent cold shudders down her back. Now it stopped abruptly, then broke forth anew in entreating accents, and died away in a moan of utter contrition and despair. It was as if some damned



spirit had risen from the awful pit to pour forth his agonized soul in a prayer for forgiveness and surcease of torment. With a wild effort to steady her agitated nerves, Constance plunged forward, holding her companion's arm with the grip of terror. She had a dreadful conviction that something was stirring behind her, following close in her steps, but she did not dare turn about to see what it was. Then the despairing voice was silent. The shrine, with its lamp which flickered feebly in the murky air, appeared like a sanctified refuge from the evil phantoms that pursued her. There could be no doubt of it, there was somebody behind her. "There is no peace in Satan's clutches." Was that the reason she was so agitated? Could it be possible that—no, the thought was too preposterous; but, for all that, she felt one of those relentless black claws right behind her, as if ready to grasp her by the neck. With this cold horror clutching at her heart, she rushed up toward the altar. The rude features of a painted Madonna rose faintly out of the encompassing gloom. She flung herself into a pair of invisible arms that stretched out of the dark, and she felt a heart beat hot and fast against her own. A warm breath grazed her cheek; then the arms were relaxed as by a shock, and she fell upon the steps of the shrine. A sound as of rushing water filled her ears; then she seemed to be sinking, sinking, until she lost herself in a white void and dissolved into the infinite nothing.

When she regained her consciousness she found herself lying on the gravel in the garden, with the count's coat rolled up under her head. He was kneeling at her side, bathing her forehead with eau-de-cologne and holding a vinaigrette to her nose. On the other side of her stood young Talbot, with a face full of acute misery, and Burroughs, with a stony stare which might express anything. The sun shone round about her, the leaves of the ilex rustled, and there was a great stone-pine which blotted out half the sky. That was the only impression which for a long while penetrated her torpid senses. Then slowly her memory asserted this fact and that, and the situation dawned upon her.

"It is this—this—young man," said the count, with intense bitterness,— "it is he who has caused this trouble."

He did not point toward Talbot, but he turned his head toward him and stared at him with savage severity. In response to Constance's surprised look, he continued, "It was he who walked behind us and frightened you."

Talbot looked the picture of abject humility and despair; he almost tottered under the burden of his guilt. It was his torturing jealousy which had prompted him to play the spy. To see his beloved plunge, as it were, into the bowels of the earth with his detested rival (it was in this kind of melodramatic language that Talbot depicted the situation to himself),—what sort of lover would he have been if he had endured such an affront? Of course he had not intended to frighten her out of her wits, nor had it occurred to him that his stealthy footsteps behind her (which he imagined were quite inaudible) would send her flying toward the shrine, where that loon Burroughs was holding his devotions. It was that unexpected phantom, struggling with the old Adam in him (and in this instance evidently succumbing), who had

wrought all the mischief, and against whom the count's wrath ought to have been directed.

"Gentlemen, we can now dispense with your services," said the count, with frigid civility, assisting Constance to rise to her feet. "I shall have the pleasure of sending a friend to you to-morrow, Mr. Talbot, and calling you to account for your conduct."

Talbot felt as if his heart would break. The way that high-nosed Frenchman said "we" nearly drove him to distraction. He could have murdered the count with enthusiasm, and he felt a tragic satisfaction in the probability that to-morrow the count might have the privilege of murdering him instead. For that the friend's call meant a challenge he had no doubt, and those military fire-eaters were expert shots and swordsmen, against whom he could scarcely hold a candle. The young man, in a state of exalted misery, marched down the weed-choked gravel-walk, and hid his sorrows behind the foliage of a wild-growing arbor.

Burroughs, in a wholly different frame of mind, followed a diverging path, striding heedlessly along, with a dogged look, through which the kindling emotion occasionally flashed.

"Almighty God," he cried, and cast an imploring look toward the sky, "Almighty God, what is to become of me? Why hast thou made me so black a sinner? O God, tear the sin out of my heart and make me pure! Make me pure!" he shouted, and wrung his hands until every finger-joint cracked. "Why hast thou brought this woman into my path?" he went on, with low and passionate pleading. "Thou knowest how weak I am: oh, tempt me not so sorely! Oh, God, God, God!" he cried, with rising ardor, "I am lost! I am damned! But, Father in heaven, oh, take this curse away from me! I almost glory in my damnation!"

He flung himself down behind a boxwood hedge, wrung his hands, and beat his breast, while through his groans and impassioned cries to God sounded the merry twitter of birds in the chestnuts overhead. He heard but faintly the summons of the bugle from the terrace, and saw as in a dream the gay ladies, mounted upon donkeys, each escorted by a cavalier, move out of the gate and descend the rocky slope. Now and then a pretty face and figure became visible above the wall, or a bright-colored garment glimmered among the great tree-trunks. But he closed his eyes and lay motionless. He knew the wiles of the devil.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A PERPLEXING SITUATION.

TALBOT paced up and down the mosaic floor in his stately studio. He was in a state of feverish excitement. Now he felt glorified, exalted, and then again humiliated, angry, and mortally frightened. He did not like to acknowledge this latter emotion, but, for all that, when the cold fact stared him in the face that before night he might be a dead man, he found it impossible to suppress a nervous tremor. He had spent the night in making a pathetic will, in which he bequeathed

his pictures and all his other effects, including a capital of some forty-five thousand dollars, to Constance Douglas, "as a memorial of the love he bore her." There were no reproaches, no sentimental allusions, but merely this barren, matter-of-fact statement, which he repeated to himself, with tears in his eyes, as he walked up and down the floor. He never observed where the rugs ended and the mosaic commenced, and the sudden click of his heels upon the stone gave him every time a slight shock. The vision of Constance in her suave and lovely dignity—so gentle, so high-bred, so distractingly adorable—hovered before him wherever he turned; and the thought that this one glorious woman—the only one in all the world for him—should belong to that soulless, mechanical puppet of a Frenchman filled him with an agony of despair. He had never imagined that this wild strength of suffering was in him. It seemed as if every cord of his being must snap,—as if every breath that broke with pain from the depth of his breast must be his last.

His breakfast was sent to his bedroom, which adjoined the studio, at about nine o'clock, but he found it impossible to touch it. Watkins, the servant, observed with wonder that he had not been undressed, and asked respectfully if he might not bring him a glass of port wine or sherry. Talbot nodded, and continued his restless walk. On the return of the servant he drank a glass of sherry, and his agitation presently gave way to a dogged stoicism. He was about to seal the envelope containing his will, when suddenly it occurred to him that without a witness it would not be valid. He accordingly rang for Watkins, and with a nonchalant air begged him to witness the signature of this paper. Watkins, taking in the situation at a glance, scrawled a series of large and rambling letters which might or might not mean Watkins. Then he took his leave noiselessly, and within two minutes Sir Percy emerged from his bath, arrayed in a long dressing-gown thrown over his *robe de nuit*, and advanced with a startled countenance to the middle of the room.

"Why, what the deuce—aw—does this mean, Talbot?" he cried, quite out of breath. "Watkins says you have been making your will."

"Well, I just thought I might as well do it now as some other time," Talbot replied, with forced gayety. "Nobody knows when he's got to turn up his toes, Sir Percy."

"Oh, stuff, my boy! stuff!" exclaimed the baronet, impatiently. "You don't fancy—aw—you can fool me with that sort of chaff, do you?"

"I don't want to fool you, Sir Percy; but really, if you will pardon me, I think I am master of my own conduct, and do not owe you an account of my actions."

"Oh, come now, my dear fellow, don't be huffed. You don't owe me—aw—anything but what you would—aw—owe to—aw—any friend who takes an interest in you. Whether you like it or not, I am going to stay with you to-day and see that you don't commit any folly."

Sir Percy, wrapping his rich Turkish dressing-gown about his portly form, went to the door and rang the bell. When Watkins reappeared,

with a promptness as if he had been attached to the bell-cord, his master ordered, with much minuteness, the clothes which he was to wear, and his toilet-case.

"My dear fellow," the kind-hearted Briton soliloquized, as he stood before the mirror brushing his scant locks with two superbly-carved ivory brushes, "I knew it well enough yesterday. You have—aw—fallen under the enchantment of Circe, don't you know?"

Talbot, who saw that every motion he made was watched in the mirror, flung himself into a chair and sighed. He knew that his noble friend was perhaps the most stubborn man of the most stubborn race that the sun has ever shone upon, and he was aware that remonstrance on his part would be sheer waste of breath. He therefore resigned himself, with much bitterness and vexation of spirit, to the inevitable, and fell to watching the various operations of the baronet's extremely complicated toilet. He could not help admiring his magnificent build, his great, hairy chest, his straight and robust figure, his red, masculine neck, and the conscientious care which he bestowed upon his personal adornment. The array of silver-topped cut-glass bottles stretched itself farther and farther across the curtained *duchesse* toilet-table, and a large assortment of brushes and instruments of manicure occupied all the space that was left. The valet, who stood by, silently handing his master each article as it was needed, was the most perfect human automaton that ever could have been devised. The undyed camel-hair underclothes were fine as silk and as light and soft as down. As the sublime never lies remote from the ridiculous, Talbot soon found himself pitying his own simple estate. When compared with this indisputably superior product of a more complex civilization, his hasty ten-minutes' toilet appeared to him like a remnant of barbarism. As a mere well-groomed animal, he surely could not hold a candle to his host. And might not that possibly account for the light esteem in which he was held by the woman he loved? It was an instinctive sentiment on her part, of course; but was it at all unlikely that she, who herself belonged to the physically elaborate, highly developed species, might feel a half-unconscious alienation from him because he was a less perfect animal and less carefully tended? The count moved at her side with stately ease as her peer and equal, and not a hair of his head or of his waxed moustache was ever out of order. His nails were long, polished, and rosy, and his hands large, firm, and of noble shape. That, in spite of this, he was unutterably detestable, she could scarcely be expected to discover, because she had lived only on the surface of her soul, and had never had any experience which had stirred its depths.

It was a bitter discovery the young artist made while he sat there watching Sir Percy preparing himself for the battle of life. He came to the conclusion that his love was hopeless; that even if he was not killed to-day—even if he had never been refused—there was not a shadow of a possibility that Constance would ever put up with such a second-rate specimen of humanity as himself. It accordingly made very little difference whether the count killed him or not; and he determined, when the second called, to choose pistols, and as short a distance as the rules permitted.



It was a little after ten o'clock when Sir Percy dismissed his valet, hooked his arm in Talbot's, and conducted him into the studio. The latter, being too utterly broken in spirit to offer any resistance, dropped into an easy-chair and hid his face in his hands. The baronet remained standing in front of him, and gazed at him with eyes full of compassion.

"Talbot, my boy," he said, seriously, "I am sorry for you; I am awfully sorry for you. If it were—aw—a heartless coquette who had set her trap for you, I could—aw—I could perhaps help you; but she isn't that sort. The deuce of it is that she is divinely perfect. If I were—aw—twenty years younger, I might make my will too, because she had refused me—don't you know?—and put—aw—a hole through—aw—my cranium, and make no end of—aw—unpleasantness for my friends. But—aw—I have, on the whole, forgiven her—aw—for not wanting to be Lady Armitage, and—aw—I dare say you will forgive her for not wishing to be Mrs. Talbot, don't you know?"

Having delivered himself of this speech, which was the longest Talbot ever had heard him make, Sir Percy began to pace up and down on the floor, pausing every now and then before the sketches and unfinished pictures which were tacked to the panel. The studio was a perfect museum of picturesque antiquities: mediæval swords, armors, helmets, and breast-plates shone upon the walls, and a variety of rich textile fabrics, Italian and Oriental, were draped over easels, tables, and carved chests of oak exhibiting gaunt saints in devotional attitudes. All these treasures belonged to Sir Percy, but he delighted to play Mæcenas, and his liberality toward his artistic *protégé* knew no bounds.

"Talbot," he said, after having studied a bronze Faun upon the mantel-piece with feigned interest, "I wish you would cheer up and go to work. I don't want—aw—to scold; but for your own sake—don't you know?—it might be a good thing. I can pardon—aw—a man in love for being lazy, but I can't—aw—pardon a lazy man for being in love."

This unexpected epigram so pleased its author that he had to take another turn on the floor, and the world in general began to assume a more cheerful aspect to him. He was about to impart some more good advice, when Watkins entered and presented him with a card upon a silver salver.

"M. Raymond de Bellac! I know no such man."

"The call is for me," said Talbot, with forced composure, lifting his pale and suffering face from the arm of the chair.

"You wish me to go?"

"If you would be so kind."

Sir Percy stood for a moment hesitating, and turned at last to go. But before he reached the door he faced about and took three rapid steps toward his young friend.

"Talbot," he said, in a voice of sympathetic distress, "you have some devilish plan in your head. There is—aw—no use denying it."

"Well, suppose I have: what are you going to do about it?"

"Watch you till you recover your reason; that is what I am going to do about it."

"I shall never recover my reason, as you call it."

"My dear fellow, that is—aw—what we all think, don't you know? But never is a good while. I will lay you a hundred guineas that—aw—in a fortnight you will have taken your place rationally—aw—with the rest of us at the—aw—foot of the shrine and be—aw—humbly content with the sight and the smile—aw—of the goddess."

The baronet had in the mean while made a sign to Watkins to show the visitor in. Presently a small, dapper Frenchman, with an ominously solemn mien, was ushered into the room. He gazed doubtfully from Talbot to Sir Percy, and, as the latter seemed to assume the duties of host, he approached him with a ceremonious bow, and said,—

"I have the honor to present to you, in behalf of my friend M. le Comte de Saint-Réault, a challenge to fight a duel, with swords or pistols, as it may suit your convenience."

"Ho, ho!" ejaculated Sir Percy, "I was—aw—expecting something of that sort.—But, my dear boy," he cried, turning to Talbot, "what have you been doing to the count—aw—to make him—aw—want to kill you? I thought you said—aw—you had been refused."

"No, I didn't say it."

"Then you have been accepted! *Corpo di Bacco!* But what the deuce is it you are—aw—moping about, then?"

"You can't understand, Sir Percy, and I cannot explain."

"You are—aw—not exactly complimentary, don't you know?"

Talbot looked wearily out of the window.

"If you will pardon me, Sir Percy," he said, after a pause, "I will settle this affair with M. de Bellac, and you will have the kindness, I hope, not to—not to—"

"Not to interfere. Yes, exactly. All right, my boy. If you want—aw—to make a target of yourself, it is—aw—your affair and not mine."

Sir Percy made a bow to the Frenchman, and, to Talbot's surprise, took his departure. When his broad back vanished behind the blue *portières*, his *protégé* drew a sigh of relief, and proceeded, in as good French as he could command, to make arrangements for a duel in a vineyard outside the Porta Pia at seven o'clock the following morning. Quite unconsciously he took for his model the hero of one of Sardou's plays, and acted with an airy nonchalance which he felt to be extremely impressive. He insisted upon pistols and twenty paces, and remarked with a melancholy smile that he hoped that the count would forgive him for taking an advantage of him in presenting the smaller target. He hoped the count's superior skill in the use of weapons would compensate for this disadvantage. M. de Bellac, who was quite unprepared for such blood-curdling *sang-froid* in an American, objected to his barbarous conditions, and gave Talbot the satisfaction of playing his heroic part to the end. Of course I do not mean to insinuate that his sorrow was feigned and his conduct insincere; but his temperament was so constituted that he could act and suffer simultaneously. A curious sub-consciousness of heroism throbbled through his sore and aching heart, without at all relieving its soreness.

After a conference lasting half an hour, M. de Bellac backed out

of the room with many bows, promising to return in the afternoon with the count's acceptance or proposed modification of the conditions. Talbot spent the forenoon (as he felt, under the constant surveillance of the servants) in writing farewell letters to his friends, until he was interrupted by the announcement of luncheon. He found Sir Percy, who had just returned from a drive, in excellent humor, without at all suspecting the cause. But at three o'clock, when M. de Bellac returned with a letter from the count unconditionally withdrawing his challenge and declaring that it had been provoked by a deplorable misunderstanding, the plot began to unravel itself, and he divined that Sir Percy must be at the bottom of it. He felt angry at first, and humiliated: he could not but regret the wasted misery and poignant sorrow of the night. But he did not dare question Sir Percy, or complain. He knew that what he had done was prompted by the kindest feeling. A strange lassitude came over him. He felt weary and withered in every limb. The world lay like a great dreary blank before him. But when he closed his eyes, there shone with a mild radiance in his memory a pure and lovely face, and a pair of clear and tranquil eyes gazed upon him with a divine compassion.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE OLD ADAM.

NATHANIEL BURROUGHS spent a wakeful and miserable night, after the picnic, at an inn in Frascati, and, without breakfasting, took an early train the next morning to Rome. His head was heavy as lead, and the futility of existence oppressed him like a positive burden. His throat was parched, and he had a bitter taste in his mouth. Every now and then he found himself talking to himself, uttering inane phrases which seemed to have no connection with his thought.

"I am now forty years old," he would mutter, automatically, and then recollect in the next moment that he was not forty, but thirty-two years old. As he walked from the railroad-station across the Piazza delle Terme, he began to yawn, and a deadly weariness overtook him. He would have liked to lie down, like an irresponsible beggar, against a sunny wall, and sleep away from all his misery. Why did he find it so much harder than other people to live uprightly? Why did the Evil One mock him by perpetual temptations, and God, upon whom he called, send no angel to help him? There was a mighty mystery at the bottom of all this, and Burroughs, exhausted as he was, did not have the strength to grapple with it. But, for all that, the queries haunted him like a whisper in the dark, "Is it I who am wrong, or is it life that is wrong? If I am wrong, why did God make me so? Do I not pray to Him, and pour out my soul to Him, and cry to Him out of the night that will swallow me up?"

He saw the grand staircase leading up to the Santa Maria Maggiore, and its length seemed endless; he climbed wearily up, but had scarcely strength to push aside the leather mattress that covered the entrance. He reeled through the monumental pomp of marble tombs

and porphyry columns. There was a grateful dusk under the lofty arches, although a multitude of tapers burned about the high altar, and the sun sent shafts of jasper, sapphire, and ruby radiance through the great rose-window. Big glowing drops of blood-red light trembled upon the walls and brought illusive blushes to the emaciated cheeks of the painted martyrs. The air vibrated with the deep but subdued tones of the organ, which sounded like a distant muttering of the wrath to come.

Nathaniel Burroughs crossed himself and murmured a prayer. The mere outward impression of the splendor of the church soothed his overstrained nerves: emotional as he was, ever vacillating between extremes of feeling, he had a sudden sensation as if a shield had been thrust forward between him and the fiends that pursued him,—as if he had suddenly stepped into the shadow of the Almighty's wings. The air, heavy with incense, seemed also to dull the edge of his pain, and the music with its solemn monotony lulled the voices of fear and remorse into an uneasy slumber. He seemed part of something far grander and stronger than his own petty self,—something mighty and venerable, that had borne for ages the woes of man and settled his account with the stern Creator. This feeling he had never had in the dreary little carpeted church in Indiana, with its pathetic whitewashed barrenness, and its twenty yards of stove-pipe, supported by iron wires which ascended with many crooks and bends toward the ceiling. It was beautiful and satisfactory that the greatness of God should impress the sense as well as the soul; and Burroughs felt, amid this rich, august splendor, the presence of the Most High as he had never felt it before.

Moving mechanically, he had walked up the right transept and found himself in the gorgeous Sistine Chapel. The mass was being celebrated in another part of the church, but under the vast dome the chorus of angelic boy-voices, with the deep organ accompaniment, was scarcely more than a melodious murmur, a softly-surging sound which rose and fell and broke in music and was silent. The American felt the tears rise to his eyes. The music, the voices of the boys, the splendor of the church, all united into an overwhelming impression which could only find vent in tears. He flung himself down beside the tomb of Pope Sixtus V. and wept like a child. Through the mist of tears he became at last conscious of Ribera's great picture that hung on the wall before him. It was St. Jerome beating with a stone his poor, withered flesh, in which a spark of unholy desires appeared yet to be lingering. The penitent, remembering the saint's trials in the desert, so much severer than his own, gazed earnestly at the picture, moving his lips silently, and, merely to keep temptation at bay, told his rosary with feverish ardor. But the moment his zeal faltered, St. Jerome's grizzled head would change into a far lovelier one, which would peep with its sweet, vague smile out of the mist of incense and put all the pious fancies to flight. Again and again the battle was renewed, and again and again the old Adam routed the new.

Late in the afternoon a priest, happening to visit the Sistine Chapel, observed a man lying prostrate upon the floor, with his forehead resting upon the step of the pope's tomb. He supposed at first that he



might be praying; but, being struck by his strange immobility, he tapped him on the shoulder and whispered, "*Pax vobiscum.*" As the penitent made no response to this greeting, the priest called an assistant, and soon ascertained that the man was unconscious. Together they carried him into the sacristy, bathed his temples, and chafed his hands. Presently a young priest entered who recognized the American. A physician was sent for, the patient was bled, and every effort was made for his resuscitation. But the tide of life was running low in that gaunt, emaciated frame, and it seemed for a while as if God would grant his prayer, giving to the spirit the final victory over the flesh.

When Burroughs opened his eyes he felt as if he were returning from a long, bright journey. He took up the burden of consciousness with regret. He did not know where he was, and dreaded the effort to recall the agonized fever-dream which yet smouldered in his memory like a half-smothered fire. A Sister of Mercy, with a benign and placid face, was kneeling at his bed, moving her lips in silent prayer. The crucifix on the table before him, the iron bed upon which he lay, and the bare gray walls, told him that he was in a hospital. His limbs ached when he tried to move them, his head seemed too heavy to lift, and his hands, as they lay on the bed-spread, felt numb and enormously large. He thought, with a vague satisfaction, that he had contracted the Roman fever and that the hour of rest was close at hand. A bitter reluctance to take up again the half-won battle with the fiends that dwelt in his heart was the only sensation of which he was conscious.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### AN UNCONGENIAL PAIR.

It was about three weeks after Sir Percy's picnic when the Rev. Augustus Norman, a spare and lean man, with a clean-shaven ecclesiastical face, mounted the broad staircase of the Barberini Palace and rang the door-bell of the Douglas apartment. He looked more like a Catholic priest than a Protestant clergyman; and it is safe to prophesy that if he had been what he looked, he would have been an archbishop or a cardinal. Such thin and clean-cut lips, so finely arched a nose, expressing altogether a highly-organized personality, and such perfect, well-bred worldliness, lead in the Church of Rome to honors which our Protestant establishment cannot bestow.

Mr. Norman had come to pay a pastoral visit to Miss Douglas, whom, as a man of the world, he admired, and in whose spiritual welfare he was, as her pastor, naturally interested. It had been frequently insinuated that, in case she had been an heiress, he would have aspired to her hand. But this was chiefly because he was a man of whom it seemed inconceivable that he could marry any one but an heiress, if he married at all, and she was a woman whom no man could approach without being supposed to harbor matrimonial intentions. It seemed so entirely fit that she should marry Mr. Norman, because he stood as much apart from other men as she did from other women; and, more-

over, it was obvious to any one who knew how to judge of such relations that neither was in the least in love with the other.

When Mr. Norman entered the Renaissance *salon*, with the Cupids and the Gobelin tapestries, he composed his soul in patience, knowing that he would have to wait, and began critically to examine the bric-à-brac. He was a great judge of bric-à-brac, and was appealed to as indisputable authority in porcelain, Etruscan pottery, mediæval carvings, and all sorts of artistic antiquities. Americans in Rome rarely made an important purchase without first obtaining his approval. He picked up a superb antique gem, representing Paris and the three goddesses, and admired the exquisitely articulated limbs and the noble pose of the four figures. He had not by any means exhausted their charm, when the draperies of the door were drawn apart, and Constance advanced toward him with outstretched hands. She did not greet him impetuously, but with the quiet cordiality of an old friend. He grasped both hands, but had, before they had reached him, made his quick and acute observations. He saw that something unusual had happened,—that a new force had invaded Constance's life and kindled a new light in her eyes.

Being something of a gossip, of a refined and entertaining kind, Mr. Norman began by relating the latest news of the town, who had come and who had gone, the latest rumor of a compromise with the Vatican, and the very vague but not incredible report that a certain grand historic family, which in the past had supplied several popes, were seeking a reconciliation with the Quirinal. He had just built his bridge with diplomatic skill to a little personal confidence, when, to his chagrin, the maid entered and announced, with a curious Italian twist, Signore Nathaniele Buroz. Constance hesitated for a moment, during which a perceptible emotion flitted across her face, and finally said, with an effort, "Show him in."

The drapery of the door was pulled aside once more, and a face, yellowish-pale and shaggy, appeared between its folds. Constance shivered at the sight of it. Mr. Norman's keen features grew tense with interest. Burroughs, without any greeting, and with his eyes fixed with a wild intensity upon Constance, staggered across the floor, and remained standing opposite to her, leaning against the arm of a chair. It was difficult to judge what that glance meant. It expressed anxiety, strained determination, sadness, and a gleam of frantic ecstasy. It was the glance of one risen from the dead, who had beheld the purgatorial flames, and whose soles they had singed.

"I have had a vision," he said, in a deep, husky voice.

"My dear sir, you are ill," ejaculated Mr. Norman, sympathetically, stepping up to him and seizing him by the arm.

Burroughs looked at him in a vague, absent-minded way, and made once more an effort to speak, but a violent coughing-fit choked his voice. When he had recovered himself sufficiently, he straightened himself and pressed a red bandanna handkerchief against his eyes. Suddenly he removed it again, fixed the same burning gaze upon Constance, and cried, with terrible solemnity, "Hell is yawning at your feet!"

Constance gave a start, turned pale, and sank back in her chair. She trembled violently, and shuddered as with cold.

"I have been dead," Burroughs continued, in his deep, vibrating bass, "but the Holy Virgin has sent me back to save you. I could have no peace in heaven or in hell if you were lost. I was ill, and I saw you in a vision, sinking,—sinking out of my sight. I called your name despairingly, and my voice travelled with awful reverberations through space. But you did not hear me. The pit opened and engulfed you. Then I plunged into the pit after you, and I prayed so loud and wildly that the abysses resounded with my voice, which rolled away like thunder. I heard you answer from far down in the deep, first faintly, but I followed the voice, shooting through barren realms of cold and terror, and, at the end of an infinite time, I found you. Listen to me now, for I cannot lose you again; I will not, I must not lose you!"

There was a sudden appealing tenderness in these last words which awakened an echo in Constance's heart. She had felt shaken and senselessly frightened while he stood before her as the prophet of doom; but in the last imploring tones there was a ring of warm human emotion which she understood. The immeasurable distance which had opened up between them, whenever he gave her a glimpse of his austere, storm-tossed soul, was not all at once annihilated, but it was lessened, so that the eye and the ear could reach across it. He was no longer a mere voice crying in the wilderness, but a man crying, and crying to her. She felt as if she had been asleep for a hundred years and had just been awakened. The sweet spiritual lethargy into which she had been born and more securely lulled by Mr. Norman's gentlemanly and decorous sermons was a thing of the past; and the beautiful equilibrium and repose of soul which had made her a wonder and a delight she could never again recover. She was not clearly conscious of such a change, of course; for she was not clearly conscious of anything except the shock to her whole being, which vibrated through deeps beyond deeps, and aroused vague voices and cries, and dim fears, and tumult and ferment.

Mr. Norman, who had attempted twice to interrupt the vehement harangue, now stepped forward with an air of authority, and said to Burroughs, "Permit me to conduct you to your home. You have shocked Miss Douglas, and you owe her an apology."

Burroughs, as if he had just become aware of his presence, stared at him with solemn scorn. He knew Mr. Norman by sight, and had often expressed himself with unbounded contempt concerning the type of clergy which he represented.

"O ye false prophets," he exclaimed, warningly, "ye wolves in sheep's clothing, how shall ye flee from the wrath to come?"

"Have the kindness to compose yourself, and then begone," said Norman, superciliously. "I must insist upon it. My coupé is at the door. It is at your service."

"I will not go: I wish to speak with this woman alone."

"Pardon me, but I may be obliged to summon the concierge, if you do not instantly obey."

He appealed with his eyes to Constance, who still sat as she had fallen, with her hands pressed against her forehead. She rose now, slowly, as if struggling out of a dream, and came forward, with a face that wore an air of agitation and pained surprise. All her beautiful security and repose were gone.

"He wishes to speak with me alone, Mr. Norman," she said, in a tremulous whisper.

"Yes, but you—you don't wish to speak with him?"

"Yes, I do,—that is, I think I do."

"You are not in a condition to decide that question, Miss Douglas. Let me decide it for you."

"But the vision, Mr. Norman! he has seen a vision."

"Fiddlesticks! He is crazy. Let me ring for the concierge."

She stood for a moment wavering, bewilderment and doubt vividly depicted in her features. Suddenly she met Burroughs's great, mournful gaze resting upon her. Her will-power shrank away and vanished. It was like a physical spell,—a charm, compelling submission.

"I will stay with him," she said, meekly. "Do not call the concierge."

"But I cannot allow it!" exclaimed the clergyman, in a vain attempt to assert his authority.

"He will do me no harm. He is a good man."

"Very well: I wash my hands of all responsibility."

Mr. Norman made the stiffest possible bow, seized his hat, and retired into the vestibule. There he rang a bell and had an interview with Hortense, the French chambermaid, whom he commanded to be within call, as her mistress might need her. With his conscience thus partly pacified, he descended the stately staircase, invoking anathemas upon the crude and unwholesome fanaticism which had spoiled in an hour the beautiful work of many beautiful years.

"It is the Methodist that speaks through him," Mr. Norman muttered. "He is a Catholic only in name."

For in his heart Mr. Norman had a profound admiration for the pomp, the discipline, and the worldly sagacity of the Catholic Church, and fraternized, without the least scruple, with well-bred and learned ecclesiastics who shared his æsthetic proclivities.

A light mist gathered in Constance's eyes, as she stood quailing before Burroughs's earnest and steady gaze, yet unable to tear herself away. She was conscious of no strong attraction toward him, but merely of a strange power which suspended her whole personality and made it subordinate to his. A kind of emotional tremulousness—an anxious insecurity, as if she were treading on marshy ground that might break under her feet—was her dominant sensation. In this state she could hardly be expected to observe the change which his glance underwent, gradually relaxing the severity of his features. The spiritual fires faded; a pang of pity nestled at his heart, as he saw this grand and tranquil woman so shaken by the mere force of his gaze and his denunciation. He was not a brute; and, with all his religious exaltation, he was very human. Emotions with him were overpowering while they lasted, but they vacillated between extremes, and followed each



other in quick succession. The fact began to dawn upon him once more that this woman was supremely beautiful. He had been aware of it, of course, from the first moment he saw her; but he had prayed and fasted and burned with fever until his body seemed but a fragile shell, through which the spirit might shine unobscured. But, righteous God, what had it all availed? Here stood the emaciated remnant of him that was left and feasted with an ungodly delight on the sublime perfection of the woman's beauty. He had come to save her soul, to rouse her from her false security, and now he could not repress a vague regret that that sweet security was gone. What right had he to spoil so fair a work of God?—for was it not God who had made her fair and set her in the midst of a bright and smiling world to rejoice the hearts of men? Why not rather join the throng of the gay, laugh with the merry, and snatch an hour of joy on the brink of the all-engulfing gloom?

These fancies flitted through the young ascetic's brain as he stood face to face with Constance, trying to recall the stern message he had come to bring her. His eyes fell suddenly upon his own gaunt figure reflected in the long pier-glass, and he saw what he had never seen before,—that he looked very shabby. His shoes particularly were distressingly uncouth. There was something seedy and unfinished in his entire appearance. He had known before that he was not elegant; but he had never aspired to be elegant. He had disdained to rival the world in its vanities. But that he looked like this,—simply and vulgarly shabby,—that he had never dreamed. An awkward self-consciousness came over him, and he found it impossible to recover his tone of authority. It was God who in order to punish him for his sinful thoughts had made him appear so pitiful.

"I had wished to say more to you," he said, at last, bowing his head in deep humility, "but God has not found me worthy. He has taken His spirit away from me."

She did not answer, but let her glance wander uneasily among the chubby Cupids on the walls who were pelting each other with roses.

"Do you—do you think—I am lost?" she asked, anxiously, without daring to look at him.

The question sounded so strange that she blushed with embarrassment. She had never before felt any anxiety about the state of her soul, and never talked with any one about it.

"I do not know the way of life myself," he answered, in a voice of contrition; "how can I direct you?"

"But you said you did," she murmured, innocently.

"The way that you go is the way of life to me."

There was a vague wonderment in the gaze she fixed upon him,—not disapprobation, but a puzzled distress, as if his speech was beyond her. She could not emancipate herself sufficiently from the code of etiquette, which bound her with invisible ties, to lay her soul bare before him; and a natural modesty, not wholly reprehensible, restrained her. She felt herself in the presence of a spiritual power before which she was ready to bow down; but, by a strange freak of feeling, the man in whom this power was embodied seemed remote and alien. He spoke to

her across an abyss, and she had to strain her voice to give him answer. If she had known that it was he who had clasped her in his arms in the dark tunnel at the Villa Aldobrandini, she would probably have refused to see him; but she had a confused impression that it was Talbot who had made all the trouble on that occasion, and, as no one had referred to the embrace, she was inclined to believe that it was a mere hallucination of her overwrought fancy.

Nathaniel Burroughs, oppressed by the sense of his shabbiness, had backed away from the mirror, and sunk into a low settee embroidered with cranes in silver and black. He stared for a while vacantly before him, and groaned in spirit at the cruelty of the fate which held him in its clutch. Why had God brought this woman into his life? To tempt him, or in order that he might become the means of her salvation? He prayed silently for light; and suddenly the thought stood out, bright and clear, that this was a mission from on high which he could not afford to disregard. The tears came into his eyes,—tears of gratitude and of joy. He had heard the voice in the night of perplexity and doubt which called upon him to save this rare and precious soul. Ah, but it was pitiful! His heart was in the next moment torn with anguish. For the joy that flared up from the bottom of his being was not a holy joy, but mixed with a sinful delight in the sight and the anticipated companionship of a beautiful woman. He arose and gazed straight into her face with his black luminous eyes.

"I must go," he said, in a voice choked with emotion: "the Lord has turned His countenance from me."

"And will you come back?" she asked, half pleadingly.

"Yes: when the light burns again brightly within me, I will come back."

She advanced hesitatingly toward him and held out her hand as he turned to go. He grasped it with tremulous haste in his large, hot palm and shook with a delicious shudder. "Oh, God, have mercy upon me!" he murmured, as with unsteady steps he vanished between the folds of the *portière*.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE EMANCIPATION WAIST AND THE SISTER OF CHARITY.

CURIOUS affinities are apt to spring up among people who have nothing to do. In Rome nobody who pretends to be anybody has anything to do; and therefore Americans who lived next door to each other in New York have to cross the ocean in order to get acquainted. In the Eternal City all the world has such a delightful air of leisure. Everybody has time to display his attractive side, if he has any. Characters which seemed arid and commonplace at home expand luxuriously and blossom out with unsuspected charms. After two months' companionship with the Coliseum and the ruined palace of the Cæsars, Delia Saunders found it less incumbent upon her to reform the world, and George Talbot found it less likely that he would dethrone Raphael. Delia, being conscious of the insidious influences of antiquity, roused herself, however, and in order to regain her self-respect made an occa-

sional onslaught on Christianity, and called upon Cardinal Jacobini, the Papal Secretary of State, whom she endeavored to convince of the virtues of the Emancipation Waist. She had the brilliant idea that if she could obtain the endorsement of the Vatican for her invention and get it introduced in the convents it would be a magnificent advertisement. If she should succeed in using the tremendous machinery of the Roman Church for her sanitary propaganda, she might securely repose upon her laurels, knowing that her cause would triumph. She was positive that she had made an impression upon the cardinal, and wrote an enthusiastic letter about him to the "Woman's New Era." But all her hopes were dashed to the ground when in the second or third interview he informed her that his interest was wholly unofficial, and that moreover her invention would be of no use in the convents, as nuns did not wear corsets. This was a crushing blow, from which it would have taken another some time to recover. But Delia was of a sanguine temperament and constitutionally irrepressible. She lost her respect for the Catholic Church, to be sure, of which she had recently been inclined to take a favorable view, and held it now responsible for all the ills and misfortunes of man. But she looked the world in the face with the same bold and cheery disrespect as before, and presented outwardly an aggressive front to all the shams which she persisted in detecting all about her. The only one whom she allowed to suspect that she had lost heart was Sir Percy.

It was wonderful how the eccentric baronet had gained her confidence. He had quite ceased to apologize for her now, nor did he say, as before, that she amused him, but he allowed the world to talk, and frankly acknowledged the charm of her companionship. Their first serious *rapprochement* took place during Talbot's illness after his amatory sufferings and his frustrated duel with Count de Saint-Réault. Delia then descended uninvited upon the Palazzo Altemps, put the wretched Roman nurse to flight, and assumed sole charge, basing her right upon a mythical friendship which had existed nowhere but in her own imagination. Talbot was then so low that both the Italian and the English doctor thought his chances of recovery scarcely worth considering. It was an acute case of Roman fever, they said, contracted by the usual imprudence of Americans. Sir Percy, who had grown very fond of the young man, walked about the house like an uneasy ghost, scolded the servants, poked the fire vindictively, found his tea, his beef-steak, and his wines abominable, and exhibited other symptoms of distress. He could have embraced Delia when she came like an impudent angel and relieved him of all responsibility. She knew exactly the right thing to do, and seemed to bristle all over with competence. Her very presence in the sick-room seemed to charge the air with an invigorating quality which communicated itself to the invalid. Though he had no sentimental regard for her whatever, he was inclined to attribute a healing virtue to her touch. Her cool, soft hand upon his forehead felt inexpressibly grateful, and the brisk and efficient way in which she performed all the little offices for his comfort made him do penance in his heart for his past conduct toward her. He dimly apprehended (as soon as his consciousness reasserted itself) that his recovery was a ques-

tion of nursing rather than of medicine; and he knew, too, that the Italian nurse, who had slept peacefully through the night after having commended him to the protection of all the saints, had thrown his clothes upon the bed, in anticipation of his death, because, according to Italian custom, whatever is found upon the bed at the time of the demise is given to the nurse. It was not pleasant to feel one's life ebbing away among such harpies, and the mere sense of security inspired by a familiar face and a familiar voice was a more powerful restorative than all the drugs in the *materia medica*.

It was odd that none of those who knew the fair pagan attributed her invasion of the Palazzo Altamps to a desire to fascinate Sir Percy. It seemed inconceivable that a young lady who found her chief amusement in shocking people, and who never made the faintest concession to the world's prejudices, should be setting her cap for anybody. Even Mrs. Douglas, who was not given to be lenient in her judgments, could find nothing worse to say than that it was the alluring impropriety of the thing which had fascinated her. To descend, uninvited, upon two unprotected gentlemen, take full charge of their affairs, and rule them with a rod of iron,—it was just the sort of thing which would appeal to her lawless and erratic fancy. It was a practical demonstration of woman's superiority which no man in his sound senses could deny.

What Sir Percy's sentiments were on the subject no one had the courage to ascertain, as he had taken care to drop some remarks which made it unsafe henceforth to speak lightly of Miss Saunders in his presence. He treated her with the most delicate consideration while she remained under his roof, and would have offered her a permanent abode there, with all the privileges and immunities that thereunto appertained, if the occasion had not seemed a trifle inappropriate. The bed in which the patient lay was a great mediæval affair of carved oak, with Adam and Eve and the Serpent in bold relief, and a canopy with heavy drapery overhead. It stood in the middle of the floor on a raised dais, like a royal couch, and had two steps leading up to it. Sir Percy liked to sit on one side of it and watch Delia's plump and cheerful face, illuminated by the lamp and her fearless blue eyes, which seemed to challenge creation in general. He had never enjoyed such familiar companionship with a woman before, and had never suspected that such fufds of sentiment were stowed away in the out-of-the-way nooks and corners of his soul. He had been disposed to look upon himself as a constitutional bachelor,—one of nature's bachelors, as he was fond of saying,—and had contracted all the habits and eccentricities which belong to that unsatisfactory estate. The only sentimental episode in his life had been his worship of Constance Douglas, who had been unkind enough to refuse him. But it appeared to him now that he had never really loved Constance. He had a boundless admiration for her, a worshipful loyalty and enthusiasm, but scarcely any tenderness. She always dwelt, like Saint Simeon Stylites, on the top of a lofty pedestal, and allowed no one to come close enough to her to feel the warm touch of human sympathy and love. He concluded that a less statuesque bride might bring him more happiness, and with every



day that went he became more convinced that Delia Saunders, if she could be induced to exchange her deplorable name for that of Lady Armitage, might make a very acceptable English gentlewoman. He had the delicacy, however, not to give Delia any direct hint of the thoughts which agitated him while she was his guest, but was content to make himself preternaturally agreeable, hoping that she might draw her inferences. It is not at all unlikely that Delia did have her suspicions as to the motive of Sir Percy's amiability; but, if such was the case, they in no wise influenced her conduct. She was as cheerfully combative as ever, and asserted her heretical opinions with a courageous disregard of their effect upon her interlocutor.

"I must lead my own life," was the refrain of all her conversation: "I cannot, without loss of self-respect and injury to my character, lead your life or anybody else's life. I am Delia Saunders, and when John Smith comes to me and asks me to be Delia Smith, I answer, 'No, thanks, John, not unless you choose to be John Saunders. Exchange is no robbery. If it is a mutual compact we are making, and you insist upon my giving up my name and taking yours, I want you to do as much for me.' That's what John doesn't like, and off he goes in a huff and marries a little meek nobody, who has no individuality to give up, and whose charming little soft and dimpled nothingness is contentedly absorbed in his life and sacrificed to his pleasures. That is the scheme of creation, Sir Percy, and I don't mind telling you that I don't approve of it. You know, though I was born in Indiana, I am a very considerable somebody, and am determined, first of all, to be fully myself. I am a very positive bundle of qualities, some of which might prove an unpleasant discovery to the man who had the boldness to marry me, when, the day after the wedding, I untied my bundle and began to exhibit them, one by one."

It is needless to say that Sir Percy found this discourse extremely amusing, and in the depths of his masculine self-confidence vowed that, if she gave him the chance, he would teach her better things. He had an idea that Delia's convictions sat very lightly upon her and were held partly for their picturesqueness. A firm masculine hand (such as he prided himself on possessing) could, as he imagined, easily weed them out. She was a woman, after all, however much she appeared to protest against the fact, and in all fundamental qualities was not different from the rest of her sex. The longer he gazed at her fresh and altogether girlish face, whose beauty was heightened by the subdued light of the sick-room, the more he was disposed to overlook the unpalatable circumstances in her career and emphasize the essential human traits to which there could be no objection. He could not deny that the Emancipation Waist and her lecturing for temperance did not please him; but what was the advantage, after all, in having an exalted position and a superior intellect, if they did not raise him above the vulgar prejudices which dominated the mob? He had, as he well knew, a reputation for eccentricity. People rather expected him to do odd things, and if he surprised them by an odd marriage they would accept it as a confirmation of their own judgment of him and as an evidence of his consistency.

It was a severe blow to Sir Percy when Talbot began to mend so rapidly as to furnish no further excuse for the presence of his entertaining nurse. She was herself the first to perceive that the situation no longer warranted her in remaining, and no persuasions could induce her to change her mind. Neither Talbot's prayers nor Sir Percy's arguments were of the slightest avail. She donned one of her rakish hats with smiling composure, fixed it at the right angle before the mirror, patted Talbot on the head as if he were a little boy, and slapped Sir Percy lightly with her glove when he ventured to compliment her on her appearance. There was nothing for the latter to do but to order his carriage and to accompany her in state to her lodgings on the Piazza di Spagna. Talbot wept a few furtive tears when she was gone, only to give vent to his feeling of desolation and general wretchedness. When he tried to lift his hand to his face it felt large, clumsy, and heavy as lead. He took a few tentative steps about the room, with the assistance of Watkins, but the soles of his feet seemed full of tiny needles, which pricked and tickled him, and his knees were so weak that they knocked against each other like those of a new-born calf. Having finished this hazardous journey, he begged Watkins, in a hushed and tremulous voice, to bring him the portrait of Miss Douglas which stood on the table in Sir Percy's library. It was touching to see how his emaciated features lighted up at the sight of the beautiful face, and how, like a Brahmin lost in divine contemplation, he drifted away in blissful reverie from the consciousness of all earthly sin and care and sorrow. Unresentingly, uncomplainingly, he resumed his worship of the goddess who had undone him.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A HOSTILE ENCOUNTER.

THE tramontane had been blowing steadily for a month, and there were health and vigor in its breath. The winter slipped away like a pleasant tale that is told. The cold, bright sunshine poured down in divine profusion from the sky. The deep azure canopy of the heavens was fringed at dawn with a pale rose and at evening with a pale saffron edge. It seemed as if no sorrow could endure the gaze of that clear, undimmed sun, as if no heart could be heavy where the earth and the sky united in an irresistible invitation to be gay. And yet there was misery in the Eternal City that winter, and doubly acute for its contrast with Nature's smiling countenance. Talbot, after he had recovered sufficient strength to resume his interest in life, went about with a dull heart-ache, wondering how the world could revolve so gayly and the sun shine so blithely while he was so drearily wretched. The Count de Saint-Réault, too, had acquired a lugubrious mien of late, and there were those who asserted that his wooing no longer went as smoothly as before. However that may have been, it was undeniable that he no longer cruised as breezily along, with all his sails to the wind, as in the early part of the winter, and there was less rattle and clicking of metal and creaking of leather when he entered a

drawing-room. The scabbard of his sword knocked less recklessly against the furniture, the jingle of his spurs sounded less aggressive, and even his well-waxed moustache had lost its beautiful needle-points and drooped in a dispirited fashion. It was by no means the count's intention to advertise his reverses, but he was so constituted that he could not keep up the lustre of his outward magnificence unless he felt the inward stimulus of success. He had always been the spoiled child of Fortune,—had always basked in the rays of prosperity, flattery, and general admiration. And now to think that the lady whom he had honored with his homage could in pure wantonness maltreat him, preferring to his company that of a hare-brained religious fanatic! The count had had an experience which, two months ago, he would have declared to be simply impossible. He had presented himself three times in the same week at the Douglas apartment, and each time been told that Miss Douglas was not at home, although he had watched the house for hours and seen her enter without again departing. He had seen the odious Burroughs ascend and descend the broad stone staircase and remain for hours within the shelter of those walls which he strove in vain to penetrate. And, what was far worse, he noted, with a Frenchman's eye for detail, how the gaunt fanatic was blooming out into health and joy and by some mysterious process becoming rejuvenated, secularized, and civilized. He noticed with bitterness that his rival wore better clothes than before,—nothing striking or elaborate, to be sure, but yet exhibiting a subdued aspiration toward modishness. His hair and beard, too, were neatly trimmed, and the old clerical shovel-hat had been superseded by a high-crowned Derby which was quite becoming.

The count was not enough of a psychologist to interpret the full meaning of this transformation; but he was clever enough to infer that the man had gained an influence over Constance by means of religion and while endeavoring to assert it had himself fallen a victim to her charms. He would scarcely have blamed him for that, if he had been an eligible *parti* whom a rival could challenge and shoot, or be shot by,—who accepted the code of honor and was willing to abide by the fortunes of battle. But this anomalous person, who was neither a priest nor a layman, neither a gentleman nor exactly a cad,—how to pick a quarrel with him without in some way compromising one's self was a matter which the count found much difficulty in deciding.

The obnoxious Burroughs, in the mean while, was too happy to sacrifice a single thought on possible rivals. He had discovered somewhere in the recesses of his nature a strong and deep appetite for joy, which seemed the direct antithesis to his former zeal in self-torture, but which was perhaps, after all, the same thing. He had been taught that all joy was sinful, and that God demanded mortification of the flesh. There were in his early years no pleasures that appealed to him within his reach, but abundant opportunities for martyrdom. There is to strong natures an ecstasy of pain which is to them preferable to dull indifference and tame comfort. People called Burroughs ill-balanced because he was never in a normal frame of mind, but always swinging from one extreme of emotion to its opposite. His father had been

given to strong drink, and the son had been born with a predisposition to intemperance. He had inherited disordered nerves, which responded with a thousand vibrations to the shock which in normal beings produces but a hundred. Had he been born in a community where religion was less of a vital influence than it was in the pioneer settlement where he first saw the light, he would inevitably have gone to destruction. He had a deep fund of vitality in him, in spite of his nervous excitability, and a primeval vigor drawn from generations of sturdy farmers and backwoodsmen; and it was this rough vigor which, manifesting itself in word and gesture, made him impressive,—which kindled the fire in his eye and gave the ring of authority to his voice. It was that which gave him his power over Constance, and which, like imprisoned steam seeking an outlet, broke loose now in passionate joy, now in self-accusation and prayer.

The devil rose again from the abysses of the young ascetic's soul and tempted him; and the voice of conscience, which once cried so loud, grew feebler and feebler, and at times was silenced. Why did such an inexpressible well-being come over him whenever he entered that bright, softly-draped *salon*, where the pagan love-gods danced along the walls and flung their chubby legs about and found life all laughter and roses? Why was he not part of this laughing and rosy world? Why was *he* of all men doomed to gloom, deprivation, and suffering? It seemed no longer a sufficient reply that he would have abundant reward in the hereafter. His heart cried out for light and joy now,—now while the hot blood was surging through it, fraught with ineffable desires. He was to save this woman's soul, in sooth! God had called him to do it. Ah, ecstatically he would have doomed his own to perdition and counted it no loss, if he could have broken down every barrier that separated them, and danced away like those delicious, irresponsible Cupids, through a brief span of years, each entwined in the other's arms, in an intoxication of joy, until they sank wearily together into the gloom of the all-engulfing night.

It was one day late in March, when the month had shaken off the last chill of winter, that Nathaniel Burroughs, according to his wont, was ascending with a loudly-beating heart the familiar staircase of the Palazzo Barberini. Though it was the fiftieth time, at the very least, that he pulled the embroidered, brass-handled bell-cord, his pulses bounded like those of a lover stealing to the secret rendezvous. The door was opened by the French chambermaid Hortense, who made no concealment of the displeasure she felt at the sight of him. In the inner drawing-room—a large, high-ceiled room, whose palatial barrenness was softened and relieved by an abundance of costly bric-à-brac and rich-colored rugs and draperies—he found Constance awaiting him. She advanced with an eagerness half out of keeping with her stately self, and extended both her hands to him.

"You look well to-day, Mr. Burroughs," she said, looking into his face with frank pleasure.

"I am well," he answered, simply; "but you, Miss Constance, is it well with you?"

He was going to speak to her of her soul, yielding to the insistent



voice of his conscience. But an unconquerable repugnance to taking the name of God upon his lips restrained him. He dropped her hands as if they had been hot coals, and, turning away from her, walked across the floor. It was marvellous to see the change which had come over him. He stooped no longer, but flung his head back and thrust his broad breast forward. It was as if a contagion of life and youth and health had communicated itself from her to him. He felt his rebellious blood bound in his veins. In his eye burned no longer the flickering, dusky flame, but a clear and steady fire, kindled from the bright torch of day. His strong, well-trimmed beard curled densely about his chin and cheeks, and his hair, shorn of its exuberance, showed the massive shape of his head. If he was not a handsome man, he was, beyond dispute, an extremely impressive one.

"Miss Constance," he said, pausing in his march, and regarding her with an intense satisfaction, "I am—oh, my God, I don't know what I am!" he exclaimed, shaking his head, clinching his fists, and straightening his arms convulsively.

"You are good and kind," she answered, beaming upon him with her radiant smile.

"Oh, no, child, don't you believe it," he burst forth, vehemently. "I am not good and kind. I am desperately wicked."

"You have been good and kind to me," she affirmed, with the same sweet, confident smile.

"Have I? Oh, you poor deluded girl! You do not know me! You do not know me!"

"I know that your standard of goodness is so high that it is vain for us weaker mortals to try and reach it. Your ideal is so lofty that it does not surprise me that you fall below your own expectations."

"God forgive her, for she does not know what she says," he murmured, and resumed his restless march.

It was no new thing for them to talk in this strain. Of late he had taken to accusing himself of all kinds of wickedness, and she had naturally defended him against his own accusations. It was such a luxury of delight to be defended by her. Her eyes followed him as he paced up and down the floor, and there was a touching submissiveness and joy in them, as of some Biblical handmaiden who watched for the commands of her beloved master. It seemed scarcely the same Constance as of old: the lines of her face had acquired a new emotional mobility, and in her voice there were sweet cadences and intonations which almost brought the tears to one's eyes. Some would have said, "How have the mighty fallen!" But Burroughs exclaimed, with no less truth, "How wondrous are thy works, O Lord!"

When he had walked up and down for some minutes, stopping every now and then to feast his eyes upon her loveliness, she went to the window and opened a single pane in it. A breath of warm, moist, aromatic air poured in, and filled the room with a penetrating fragrance.

"I feel so deliciously weary!" ejaculated Burroughs, flinging himself, with an *abandon* of which four months ago he would have been incapable, upon a plush-covered lounge.

"Let me bring you some lemonade," she said, eagerly.

"Oh, no; it isn't necessary." But she had already risen and had rung the bell. Hortense appeared, and made a grimace as she dropped her courtesy and departed. She objected to waiting on Burroughs, who gave her no tips, and whose attractions she accordingly held to be inferior to those of Count de Saint-Réault.

Constance and her visitor sat for a while in silence, awaiting her return. There was something so warm, soft, caressing, and yet subtly stimulating in the air that blew in through the open window. They breathed more deeply, and there was a vague oppression in the fragrance, and a misty veil of indistinctness fell upon their thoughts. When Hortense made her entrance with the lemonade, Constance arose quietly, took the pitcher, and poured out a glass for her guest. He grasped it eagerly, and jumped up to resume his march, as soon as he had drained the goblet. There was a restrained energy in his step, like that of a caged animal. She crossed the floor and sat down upon the lounge between the windows. The breeze blew a loose lock of hair across her forehead, and the sunshine, falling upon her hand as she raised it, showed her fingers in rosy translucence. She lapsed into an exquisite languor; her eyes seemed fixed on vacancy; but her face grew bright and sweet, and its beauty shone with a soft splendor. He paced the floor uneasily as before, scarcely daring to look at her. He had never dreamed that an earthly creature could be so divinely fair. He tried to murmur a prayer, but could find no words. It seemed a hollow, abominable mockery. In his ascetic creed of renunciation, love, however innocent, was disloyalty to God, and therefore a sin. God claimed his whole heart, and would not be content with a fragment. And yet what was the use of disguising it? He loved, he adored, he worshipped, this woman. His soul was lost in her as in a strong intoxication, and he had no thought or wish or feeling apart from her. He had awakened her, transformed her: why, then, should she not be his? She loved him, too; he could not doubt it. Her great innocent soul, single and pure like that of a Greek goddess, bent toward him as a flower bends toward the sun.

But his priesthood! He had now twice postponed his ordination. He had accepted the financial aid of the Church while preparing himself for the sacred office. His father confessor, noting his shy reticence, suspected already his backsliding, and what one priest knew all priests knew. What fate was in store for him if he threw his obligations to the winds and listened to the voice of his heart? Ah, but here was the cup of joy held close—so close—to his burning lips, and he was panting to drain it to the dregs! The mere sight of her was perpetual delight, and to touch her was delirious rapture. Had he the strength to face the dreariness, the barrenness, of a life-long renunciation? Was life worth having at such a price? What was there left of him if his love of her were taken away? A handful of gray, shivering ashes. All the strength of his vehement nature, which formerly had expended itself in an enthusiasm of renunciation, had now burst into a sudden exuberant bloom of love. It had rushed into a new channel, leaving its old channel dry.

I do not pretend, of course, that he analyzed himself with the insight displayed by his self-constituted biographer. He knew only that an incomprehensible transformation had taken place within him, but he did not know—nay, scarcely cared—how and why. But yet he fought a battle,—thought dim thoughts, cried dimly for light and strength, and struggled confusedly with wild temptations. He did not rush lightly like a young pagan into the arms of the beloved, but he stumbled painfully along, wrestling with phantoms that barred his way, falling and rising again.

Several minutes had elapsed, and no sound was heard in the large room, except the ticking of a pink porcelain mantel-clock. Constance and Burroughs knew each other so well that they could without embarrassment be silent together. A sort of enchantment had come over her, and she could have been blissfully quiescent for hours, while his eyes rested upon her. He sat down after a while on the sofa, some distance away from her, and drew a deep breath. She had taken a bunch of Jacqueminot roses which stood in a vase on the console-table under the mirror, and, after having pressed them against her face, reached them to him. He stretched out his hand, half mechanically, to receive them.

"Smell them," she said. "Aren't they superb?"

He leaned over and buried his nose in the bouquet, clasping his hands on the outside of hers. At the touch of her warm, soft skin he shivered. His eyes glided gradually from her hands upward to her face, and rested there with a glance which was bright and tender.

"Oh, Constance, Constance!" he cried, flinging his arms about her with irresistible vehemence, "I could devour you!"

She yielded to his embrace almost passively, as the ripe fruit falls from the bough, smiling at him with large moist eyes, and heaving a long, ecstatic, tremulous sigh.

"Speak to me, speak to me!" he whispered; "tell me that you love me!"

She opened her lips as if to speak, but said nothing. But her head sank upon his shoulder, and he felt her hair graze his cheeks. It seemed so wonderful, so wildly and utterly inconceivable. Those great bright coils of blond hair with the burnished sheen in them,—to have them so close, to inhale their delicious perfume,—it lifted his life for evermore and invested it with a new, joyous dignity. And that neck, how touchingly feminine it was, with its white slenderness, and the deep groove under the occiput, where the fine loose hair grew in capricious little glistening curls. How could life ever lapse into its former insignificance after a moment like this?

I do not know how long they stood thus silently, lost in joyous contemplation of each other. There was a glad and confiding affection in her glance which thrilled him and aroused a host of good resolves in his heart. He would work for her, he would bear her lovingly through life upon tender hands, and rise to something great—he did not know what—by the inspiration of her companionship. This thought kindled again his courage, and he seized her face between his hands and reverently kissed her.

Something fell with a little thump on the floor, as he unclasped his hands: it was the Jacqueminot roses.

"Ah, my poor flowers! You have crushed them," she murmured, with a shade of regret, as she regarded the scarlet heap of crumbled and broken petals.

He stooped to pick them up, but remained resting on one bended knee, gazing up into her face like an ecstatic worshipper at the feet of the Madonna.

"Oh, God!" he cried, hiding his face in his hands, "I am not worthy of you! I am not worthy of you!"

An hour later, when the sun had dipped behind the cupola of St. Peter's, Nathaniel Burroughs emerged from the vestibule on the third floor of the Palazzo Barberini happy and radiant, like a young god. His eyes sparkled, and he held his head high, as if he felt the pressure of an invisible crown. There was buoyancy in his stride, and he struck his heels against the marble stairs with a vigor which was anything but clerical. He had descended a score of steps, and had passed the niche in which a young Bacchus stands, when he saw another figure ascending from below and steering straight against him. He recognized vaguely Count de Saint-Réault, but had to take a second look to convince himself that it was he. The count was, contrary to his recent custom, arrayed in all his regalia, and he creaked and clicked and glittered, as he moved, like a peripatetic arsenal. His features were a trifle pale, but calm and determined. Without the least flurry or excitement he approached the American, meeting him face to face on the landing. He stopped with military precision, so that the little wheels on his spurs spun around for a few seconds with an angry jingle. He stared at the guileless Westerner with a perfectly expressionless eye, threw back his cloak, so as to disengage his arm, and pulled off his right glove. Burroughs, thinking that he meant to shake hands with him, extended his own hand, and from the height of his happiness looked, not with triumph, but with kindly commiseration, upon his discomfited rival. In the same instant a clinched fist was planted on his forehead, sparks danced before his eyes, and he reeled backward, striking his head against the edge of the marble step. A ruddy stream trickled down over the white stone, consciousness left him, he lay as one dead.

"Hound of a priest!" muttered the Gaul under his breath, and, with the same stately composure, mounted to the head of the stairs, rang the bell, and was admitted by Hortense.

## CHAPTER XII.

### OH, BEAUTIFUL FAITH!

AMERICAN reputations, as we all know, have to be made in England if they are literary, in France if they are artistic. It is only our political reputations which we make at home. The rising celebrity to which I am about to refer was a pictorial one, and accordingly had to compete for Parisian laurels. It was in the *Salon* of 188-, three years



after the occurrences narrated in the last chapter, that George Talbot succeeded in attracting the attention of the august personages who preside over artistic destinies. All his friends, except Sir Percy and Lady Armitage, *née* Saunders, who both regarded him as a prodigy, prophesied failure unless he dined the critics of the most influential journals or provided bacchanals *à la fourchette* with champagne and sirens from the Opéra Bouffe after the inspection of the pictures on Varnishing Night. The young man, impractical as ever, declared, with much heated rhetoric, that he refused to sneak into the temple of Fame by a back door; and his friends retorted derisively that he would remain forever a sojourner on the staircase, a perennial candidate, perennially shut out. But they changed their tune when the *Figaro*, the *Journal des Débats*, and *Le Temps* pronounced his two canvases, "Enchantment" and "Renunciation," the most notable pictures of the Exhibition. Neither seemed in the least ambitious. Any one but a connoisseur would have passed them by. One represented a blond young woman in a Greek shepherdess costume seated on a rock, while a young man, lying on the ground, was gazing with a rapt look into her countenance. This countenance was, as a piece of pictorial individualization, simply marvellous. Never was the soul of an enchantress more subtly and yet more nobly conceived. It was not a coquette, not a shallow siren, but a great, passionate, yet innocent woman, the embodiment of some grandly mysterious force of nature, wielding a power which she did not herself comprehend. And yet every feature was so clearly and definitely modelled, and the individuality so complete and so penetrating, that it haunted the mind like an importunate melody. The landscape, too, with the goats and sheep and heathery hill-slopes, had the same exactness, the same convincing veracity in every detail. "It told its geological history as plainly as does Nature herself, and might," said the *Figaro*, "give points to the botanist."

The picture entitled "Renunciation" was of a wholly different character. It represented a narrow Roman street by night, through which a funeral was passing. Priests and penitents, carrying burning tapers, were walking behind the coffin, chanting their lugubrious chants. In the front row a strong, emaciated face was seen lighted up by a taper, and a pair of dark eyes flashed forth from under the cowl with a glance of despairing recognition at a lady who stood on the sidewalk. They were so close to each other that they could clasp hands. The yet unsubdued spirit, the old Adam locked in mortal combat with the new Adam, the hopeless impassioned cry for life and joy and love, it was all expressed, and potently expressed, in that glance. Of the lady's face so little was seen that her emotion could only be conjectured. But the story was trenchantly told, and the tremendous energy of suffering in the priest's features revealed (to quote *Figaro* once more) the painter as "a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief." It was all so personal, so acutely felt and unerringly accentuated. It is needless to say that the priest was Nathaniel Burroughs. It was known that he had joined the order of the Carthusians, and was attracting attention even in that austere brotherhood by his zeal in fasting and prayer and self-inflicted torture. He saw visions of ecstasy and of horror, and it was

whispered that upon his hands and feet the Saviour's *stigmata* had appeared. But to the world he was dead.

It was in the first flush of his triumph, while he never took up a journal without expecting to find some mention of his name, that George Talbot leaped up the familiar staircase of the Palazzo Barberini and, after having rung the door-bell twice, plunged through the tawny drapery into the Renaissance *salon*. He expected, of course, to compose his soul in patience, knowing that he would have to wait. But he had scarcely had time to realize that he had not seen Constance for two years, not since he became the accidental witness of the episode perpetuated in his picture, when the *portière* was drawn aside and she stood before him. The tears dimmed his eyes as he seized the hand she held out to him, and gazed with friendly solicitude into her face. Was this the same Constance whom he had worshipped with "the desire of the moth for the star"? She was indeed beautiful yet; she could never be anything but beautiful. But there was a touching quality in her beauty, and a new, strangely moving note in her voice, which did not belong to the enchantress of old. She was dressed with extreme care, but in rather subdued colors. She impressed his vision as a soft, rich minor chord impresses the ear. There was a weary look in her eyes, and round about them Father Time had made just the faintest annotations to mark his sneaking progress. Those ravishing lips (which had once been his despair) had preserved their exquisite curve, but they had lost something of their superb "intangibility." They seemed almost appealing, but their faint sad smile was still inexpressibly sweet.

"It is a long time since we have met, Miss Douglas," he said, in his heartiest tones. "I hope you have not entirely forgotten me?"

"When friends are few one does not forget them," she answered, a little vaguely.

"Pray do not speak of me in the plural!" he exclaimed. "Why not rather say, 'When a friend is true I do not forget him'?"

"As you like," she answered, with a little sigh, "but you have become a famous man, Mr. Talbot, and I did not know how far I might presume upon a former friendship."

It was hard to tell why that remark, half smilingly uttered, seemed so sad. It was so unlike the stately Constance he had known with the world at her feet. There was not the faintest tinge of bitterness in it, but it was, like her face and her whole personality, in the minor key. And it was that transition perhaps from the major to the minor key which aroused all the loyalty and tenderness in his heart. The old love, like smouldering embers hidden in ashes, began to send forth little ruddy jets of flame. He knew well that it had never been dead; but while it burned with volcanic rage it had made him insane and useless. Now it dominated him no longer, but he dominated it. It had intensified his personality, awakened all the latent forces of his nature, and given him a new view of life. It had been his inspiration, his salvation.

"I hope Sir Percy and Lady Armitage are well?" she said, after the exchange of the usual civilities and inquiries regarding health and

news. "I am told they have opened the house at Donnymere, and that Sir Percy has become a country gentleman."

"Yes, since his son was born he has sold his collection of shells, given up his eccentricities, and become the most devoted and chivalrous of husbands. It was Lady Percy who made him stand for Parliament; and there are even those who say it was she who elected him. At all events, she developed a positive genius for electioneering. But it is told as a joke that in return for the concession she made in becoming Lady Armitage, without insisting upon his becoming Mr. Saunders, he had to assume her politics, and I half suspect that when her son grows up she will, in pure self-defence, have to assume his. Sir Percy, you know, was formerly a Tory, but she has made him a Liberal."

"I wish you would give them both my kindest regards. *A propos* of Lady Armitage I cannot help telling you something which quite touched me. When she became engaged to Sir Percy, three years ago, they came here to call upon me. On the way Sir Percy indiscreetly confessed that he had once made me an offer of marriage, whereupon Miss Saunders promptly sent him home and called upon me alone. She talked about everything under the sun; but, although she was dying to say something about her engagement, she departed without having alluded to the all-absorbing topic. I was not well at that time, and she feared that she might in some way hurt my feelings."

Mrs. Douglas, who had grown old and paralytic since Talbot last saw her, was wheeled into the room in an invalid's chair, and stayed for an hour. She complimented Talbot upon his appearance, his success, and his fidelity to old friends, and finally urged him to stay to dinner.

The meal was served in a small, boudoir-like room painted a warm red, with a procession of naked genii laden with culinary dainties dancing along the frieze. An aged and solemn butler, who served simultaneously in two families, moved noiselessly about the table and uncovered the dishes. The conversation, which was kept up from a sense of duty, acquired an air of conscious futility. Talbot yearned to be alone with Constance and pour out his heart before her. He longed to know her troubles, her hopes, her wishes. As he sat opposite to her at the table and saw the shaded candle-light upon her noble face, and heard her soft, sweet voice, all the chords in his breast which had long been mute began again to vibrate. Whatever she said, her words touched some new stop and opened a new flood-gate of pent-up feeling. It was not because she was still beautiful, nor because she was noble and accomplished, that he loved her, but because she was Constance Douglas, the woman who had humiliated him and exalted him, who had been his misery and his happiness, who with a listless hand had struck the keys of his nature and drawn from them a storm of discords which was now being lulled into harmony.

After dinner, Mrs. Douglas begged to be excused, and was wheeled back into her sleeping-room. Talbot, after having bidden her good-night, followed Constance into the drawing-room. The air was warm, and the moonlight was pouring in through the large windows.

"Ah, this is glorious!" he exclaimed. "Do not let us have any lamps. Let us luxuriate for a while in this delicious twilight."

She made a sign to the butler, who was entering with two lamps, and he retired, leaving them together in the moonlight. They went to a window and looked out upon the Eternal City, with its towers and cupolas emerging out of the soft dimness. The mingled perfumes of roses and orange-blossoms were wafted up to them from the garden below. The stone-pines and ilixes stood veiled in shining mists, like stately ghosts wrapping their shrouds about them. Far away a melodious church-bell began to tinkle with a faint, clear sound; and when it ceased, a bird began to warble down in the orange-trees. All the world lay steeped in a soft, magical radiance, like a bright, blissful dream.

"Ah, it is sweet to live!" he whispered, letting his glance range over the moon-flooded landscape.

"There was a time when I thought so," she answered, with that little intangible sigh which was like a vague undertone in her speech.

He did not say, "Why do you think so no longer?" but he looked at her with a sympathetic regret in which there was a touch of compassion.

"Life in Rome is always worth living," he said, after a pause.

"Not always."

"But with one who loves you,—who has loved you from the first moment he saw you,—who would do everything in his power to make you happy, would it not be worth living?"

"Perhaps."

"And if such a one now begged you to share his life with him, what would you say to him?"

She gazed up into his face with large, lustrous eyes, in which the tears glistened.

"Mr. Talbot," she said, with a tremor in her voice, "you are too young and too good a man to throw away your love upon a woman whose life has already been lived,—who cannot give you back what you offer her."

"But I am so made, Constance, that I need you to fill out my existence. I will not say that I cannot live without you; but fully, richly, happily I cannot live."

She stood silent for some moments, and her pure, noble face, touched with the pallor of the moon, seemed to him wondrously sweet and pathetic. He was yearning to clasp her impetuously in his arms; but there was something in her reserve which he was impelled to respect. Suddenly she turned away from him, went to the piano and opened it. She struck the keys softly, and wandered away in a musing prelude, which gradually gathered into the exquisitely sad and tender melody of Elaine's "Song of Love and Death:"

"Sweet is true love, though given in vain, in vain,  
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.  
Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:  
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.  
Oh, love, if death be sweeter, let me die."



He stood again at her side, and felt, with a subdued agitation, the bliss of being near her, of having won her confidence, of having the privilege of sharing her troubles. She had been out in the storm; he was the rescuer who would bring her back into the safe haven. There was a wondrous pathos in her voice which moved him deeply.

Her fingers lingered on the keys, and again hovered away in a shadowy voluntary, in which there rose out of sorrow trust and hope and consolation. She looked up into his face while she played, and saw the tender lustre of his glance, and the faithfulness—the stanch and beautiful faithfulness—which had endured through trials, rebuffs, and humiliations.

“I love you, Constance,” he murmured.

“And I love your constancy,” she answered, with a faint smile.

He seized her hand and drew it gently through his arm, as she rose from the piano.

“Promise me,” he said, “that you will no more sing that heart-rending song.”

“No,” she replied, with a look which made his heart leap; for there was not only gratitude and admiration in it, but a spark, too, of a diviner passion: “henceforth I shall sing,—

‘And sweet is love who puts an end to pain.’”

THE END.

## FROM BACON TO BEETHOVEN.

**T**HEMISTOCLES being "desired at a feast to touch a lute, said 'he could not fiddle, but yet he could make a small town a great city.' If a true survey be taken of councillors and statesmen, there may be found (though rarely) those that can make a small state great and yet cannot fiddle; as, on the other side, there will be found a great many that can fiddle very cunningly but yet . . . their gift lieth the other way, to bring a great and flourishing estate to ruin and decay. And certainly those degenerate arts and shifts whereby many councillors and governors gain both favor with their masters and estimation with the vulgar deserve no better name than fiddling, being things rather pleasing for the time, and graceful to themselves only, than tending to the weal and advancement of the state which they serve."

My lord Bacon has here used the term "fiddling"—with a propriety wholly unsuspected by himself—to denote the whole *corpus* of musical art. He clearly believes that in discussing the value of musical as opposed to political affairs he has expressed the pithiest possible contempt for the former by the mere nickname he has given them in translating the *mot* of Themistocles.

It was just about the time when the wise fool Francis was writing his essay "Of Kingdoms and Estates" that the world was beginning to think earnestly upon the real significance of tones; for it was in this period that music—what we moderns call music—was born. The prodigious changes which the advent of this art has wrought in some of our largest conceptions could not have been foreseen even by the author of the "Instauratio Magna."

As for Themistocles, one can even sympathize with his saying. Harmony is little more than three centuries old, and the crude and meagre melodies which constituted the whole repertory of the "lute"-players in Themistocles's time could not have been likely to charm away an ambitious man from the larger matters of state-making.

It is, in truth, only of late years that one can announce, without being liable to a commission of lunacy, an estimate of the comparative value of music and statecraft so different from that of Themistocles and Bacon as that it affirms the approach of a time when the musician will become quite as substantial a figure in every-day life as the politician. There are those who think it wise to declare to the young men of our age that what Lord Bacon calls "the weal and advancement of the state" may be as fairly forwarded by that citizen who shall be a good fiddler—always provided that our definition of a good fiddler be accepted—as by him that shall be versed in the making of laws and treaties.

The amiable Tyndall relates that when he was once about to perform a new experiment for Mr. Faraday in his laboratory, the latter stopped him, saying, "First, tell me what I am to look for." Following this wise precaution, let the reader look for, and carry mainly with him, in the following discussion, these principal ideas:

That music is the characteristic art-form of the modern time, as sculpture is of the antique and painting is of the mediæval time.

That this is necessarily so, in consequence of certain curious relations between unconventional musical tones and the human spirit,—particularly the human spirit at its present stage of growth.

That this growth indicates a time when the control of masses of men will be more and more relegated to each unit thereof, when the law will be given from within the bosom of each individual,—not from without,—and will rely for its sanctions upon desire instead of repugnance.

That in intimate connection with this change in man's spirit there proceeds a change in man's relations to the Unknown, whereby (among other things) that relation becomes one of love rather than of terror.

That music appears to offer conditions most favorable to both these changes, and that it will therefore be the reigning art until they are accomplished, or at least greatly forwarded.

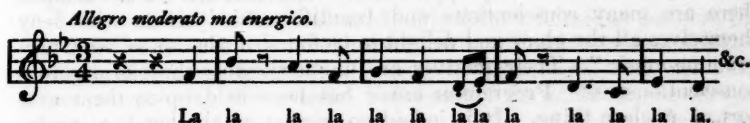
Perhaps the most effectual step a man can take in ridding himself of the clouds which darken most speculations upon these matters is to abandon immediately the idea that music is a species of language,—which is not true,—and to substitute for that the converse idea that language is a species of music. A language is a set of tones segregated from the great mass of musical sounds, and endowed, by agreement, with fixed meanings. The Anglo-Saxons have, for example, practically agreed that if the sound *man* is uttered, the intellects of all Anglo-Saxon hearers will act in a certain direction, and always in that direction for that sound. But in the case of music no such convention has been made. The only method of affixing a definite meaning to a musical composition is to associate with the component tones of it either conventional words, intelligible gestures, or familiar events and places. When a succession of tones is played, the intellect of the hearer may move; but the movements are always determined by influences wholly extraneous to the purely musical tones,—such as associations with words, with events, or with any matters which place definite intellectual forms (that is, ideas) before the mind.

It is to this idiosyncrasy of music that it owes the honor of having been selected by the modern Age as a characteristic art-form. For music, freed from the stern exactions of the intellect, is also freed from the terrible responsibilities of realism.

It will be instructive to array some details of the working of this principle.

Let the general reader recall to himself three great classifications of human activity. The universe consists (say) of man, and of what is not man. These two being coexistent, it is in the nature of things that certain relations shall straightway spring up between them. Of such relations there are three possible kinds, regarding them from the standpoint of man. These kinds are the intellectual, the emotional, and the physical. Whenever a man knows a thing, the intellectual relation is set up. When he loves, or desires, a thing, the emotional relation is set up. When he touches, or sees, a thing, the physical relation is set up.

Now, whatever may be the class of relations with which music deals, it is *not* the first class above named,—the intellectual. This has sometimes been doubted. But the doubt is due mainly to a certain confusion of thought which has arisen from the circumstance that the most common and familiar musical instrument happens to be at the same time what may be called an intellectual instrument,—i.e., the organ of speech. With the great majority of the human race the musical tones which are most frequently heard are those of the human voice. But these tones—which are as wholly devoid of intellectual signification in themselves as if they were enounced from a violin or flute—are usually produced along with certain vowel and consonantal combinations which go to make up words, and which consequently have conventional meanings. In this way significations belonging exclusively to the *words* of a song are often transferred by the hearer to the *tones* of the melody. In reality they are absolutely distinct. Nothing is easier than to demonstrate this. Let any vocalist, for example, execute the following passage :



The question may be safely put to any auditor, when the vocalist has finished, what does this mean? As long as the vague syllable *la* is used as the vehicle of the tones, no human being can truthfully say that the passage (it is the opening phrase of the Scherzo in a lovely Symphony of Gade's) brings any report whatever to his intellect. If, instead of the meaningless particle *la*, words should be employed, the case would not be changed as to the *tones* of the musical phrase. The hearers might associate the import of each word with the tone upon which it happened to fall, but the tone would not be thereby impressed with the meaning of that word. It might occur a moment after, conjoined with any number of different words. The mixture of meaning and tone is merely mechanical, not chemical.

In other words, the intellectual relations are not affected by pure tones,—not by the tones of the human voice any more than the tones of a violin. Whenever intellectual relations are determined by tones, it is not in virtue of their character as tones, but because of certain conventional agreements whereby it has been arranged that upon the hearing of these tones, as upon the hearing of so many signals, the intellects of the auditors will all move in certain directions. It may strengthen the conception of this principle to recall here that other signals than tones might have been agreed upon for this purpose. Gestures, indeed, are used with quite as much effect as tone-language in many dramatic situations, and constitute the entire speech of many persons. The selection of tones, rather than of other sorts of signals, to convey ideas has not been made because the tones had intrinsic significations, but upon purely a *posteriori* and economic considerations, the main one being that



there is no means of producing so great a variety of signals with so little expenditure of muscular force comparable to that of the human voice.

This principle cannot be justly embarrassed with any appearance of conflict between it and the doctrine of the origin of language in imitative sounds. There is no incompatibility whatever. The imitative sound will always owe its character of word-progenitor not to any intrinsic meaning in the sound itself, but to a purely extrinsic association by which the intellect has learned to connect it with some phenomenon having a definite meaning. To a person acquainted with the phenomenon of thunder, for example, the sound of the word "thunder" might suggest the phenomenon; but this suggestion is the result of circumstances utterly apart from any intellectual influence communicable by the mere tones of the vocable itself.

Once for all,—for it is a principle of such fundamental importance as to warrant its repetition in many forms,—musical tones have in themselves no meaning appreciable by the human intellect.

Some steaming-hot quarrels among modern musicians clear away immediately before the steady application of this doctrine. For example, there are many conscientious and beautiful-souled artists who deny themselves all the glory and delight to be found in the so-called "programme-music." Their motives are unquestionably those of rigorous conscientiousness. Programme-music has been held up to them as a sort of unclean thing. It is indeed no wonder at all that the steady-going classicists should have been startled and alarmed by the tremendous explosion of Berlioz in their midst. At this distance of time, the quiet thinker who has not been brought up in the traditions of any school can easily see that in the state of music at that period a clap of good rousing thunder was exactly the best thing which could happen, and for this purpose Berlioz was sent. Unfortunately, the shock of this vivid genius has been transmitted from teacher to pupil in many instances, and there are still large numbers who are unable to examine the question of programme-music in any such tranquil spirit as to warrant the hope of a philosophic conclusion. When it is examined in this spirit, it does not seem to present great difficulties.

"Programme-music," at first a sarcastic term, has now come to be almost technical, as denoting a musical composition in which the otherwise vague effects of the tones have been sought to be specialized and intellectualized by the employment of conventional words. These words are conjoined with the tones in various ways. Sometimes, as in Liszt's so-called tone-poem of Immortality, the words occur in the form of an extract from a poem which is prefixed to the musical score. In this case the hearer is merely supposed to have read the words; and the effect of the whole proceeding is little more than an invitation that the hearer will please send his intellect, during the playing of the piece, in the direction marked out by the poetic preface. But again the attempt may be more completely to unite the words and tones: as in the "*Lelio*" of Berlioz or in the musical rendition of "*Paradise and the Peri*" by Sterndale Bennett, where the words are recited either along with, or between detached passages of, the instrumental music. Now, why should not this be done? It can be shown

that programme-music is the very earliest, most familiar, and most spontaneous form of musical composition. For what is any song but programme-music developed to its furthest extent? A song is, as has been shown on an earlier page, a double performance: a certain instrument—the human voice—produces a number of tones none of which have any intellectual value in themselves; but, simultaneously with the production of the tones, words are uttered, each in a physical association with a tone, so as to produce upon the hearer at once the effects of conventional and of unconventional sounds. The unconventional sounds might be made alone by the human voice: in this event the song would simply be deprived of the intellectual elements imparted by the words. Suppose, now, that the singer shall play the air on a violin, and pronounce the words in conjunction with their appropriate tones as he goes along. What difference can be detected between playing the words and singing the words? It is but a change of instruments: instead of the voice, which is a reed-instrument, he now employs the violin, a stringed instrument. Why is not the latter as legitimate as the former?

It is, as I have before intimated, only from a failure to perceive the fact that the tones of the human voice are in themselves as meaningless, intellectually, as the tones of all other reed-instruments, that any hesitation in answering this question could arise. Certainly if programme-music is absurd, all songs are nonsense. The principle of being of every song is that intellectual impressions can be advantageously combined with musical impressions, in addressing the spirit of man. It is precisely this principle that underlies programme-music. Yet one of the most genuine music-lovers I have ever met always comes away from Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* with a melancholy sense of sin. He thinks he ought not to have enjoyed it so much; he feels that he has done wrong in deriving pleasure from an inartistic attempt even of the great king of tones. "It is programme-music," he says. This same person will listen with the most intense delight to Beethoven's cycle of songs, "*To My Love Far Away*," for example; and yet the latter is programme-music carried to such a development that every single tone is supposed to bear with it a special message to the intellect by virtue of its amalgamation with the conventional signal of a word. In the *Pastoral Symphony* the suggestions of ideas are only made in the most evanescent way. There is not the least attempt at puerile imitations. The *Nightingale* is merely suggested, for example, since no mortal ear could ever regard as an imitation the orchestral voice which gives this particular hint. Beethoven wishes to suggest a definite intellectual image to his hearer along with a certain set of tones: instead of employing a conventional word to accomplish his purpose, he chooses to employ an imitative tone. Nothing could be more natural, nothing more legitimate. Why not hint a storm with stormy tones, as well as describe a storm in stormy words? Why write one way for the reed in the clarinet, another way for the reed in the throat?

In other words, if the composer choose to invite our intellect to get up and ride, along with our emotion, why should not we accept? There is but one question,—Can he carry double?

Beethoven could. So, indeed, could Berlioz. What good reason why we should not mount and off?

No man can say. In truth, one would wonder at the blindness of artists who persistently keep themselves in leading-strings for the purpose of avoiding purely fanciful dangers, if one did not remember how music is yet so young an art that we have not learned to make it, far less to understand it.

What has now been said upon the matter of programme-music is not at all by way of digression. It has illustrated in the best possible manner the main thought so far insisted on,—to wit, how absolutely non-intellectual is the effect of pure tone, insomuch that if the composer wish to carry anything like a cognition along with music he must do so either by employing words or associations such as those suggested by imitative sounds which the mind has learned to connect with given phenomena.

A point is now reached from which an important step may be taken in the argument. This peculiarity of music completely separates it from all other arts, and places it on a plane alone. One of the results of this unique position has been already referred to. On an earlier page I spoke of the non-liability of music to the onerous exactions of realism. A somewhat more detailed statement of this idea will carry us far on our way towards an understanding of the satisfaction which music brings to our modern needs in this connection.\*

Let us compare it with painting from the point of view of realistic necessities.

A painting is an imitation, upon a flat surface, of things which are not flat; it is an imitation, upon a surface lying wholly in one plane, of things whose planes lie at all manner of angles with each other; it is an imitation of three dimensions by two, and of horizontal distance upon vertical distance. These imitations—of course "imitations" is not a precise word here—can be accomplished because human vision is not unerringly keen.

It is through the limitations of the eye that painting is possible. Perhaps this could not have been properly understood before Bishop Berkeley unfolded the true nature of vision and the dependence of the reports brought in by the sense of sight upon many other matters which are the result of judgments founded on experience. It may fairly

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\* It is made necessary by some former experiences to add, here, that no one must imagine the ensuing comparative remarks as between music and painting (or sculpture) to be made in any spirit of silly glorification of the former, or of equally silly depreciation of the latter. There is no question of merit or demerit. The argument is merely that music is the modern art because it suits the modern need, and the attempt is to show how. At another age painting might suit the need better, in which event painting would be the art of the time; but the ensuing remarks would still hold good.

If any further profession be necessary, one joyfully embraces an occasion to declare that the rise of landscape-painting seems surely one of the most notable events in the history of art; that the Americans are, or are at least to be, the greatest in this branch, and that some of them appear to me now among the very sweetest preachers of beauty in all time. The Frenchmen certainly show more technic thus far, but never such seizure of Nature, such grasp of her unspeakable loveliness and nearness to man.

be said to have been established by that acute speculator that we do not see either distance or magnitude,—that is, that these two particulars are not immediate deliverances of the sense of sight, but are the results of a comparison which the mind draws between present and certain remembered appearances gathered by touch, hearing, and other senses. This comparison is made rapidly, and the judgments founded on it are practically instantaneous; but the fact remains that distance and magnitude are mainly not given by the eye, but deduced by reason as inferences from several particulars which have been communicated by other senses in addition to sight.

It is, then, this defective organ which is practised upon (of course not in the bad sense) by the art of painting. Every one, therefore, upon approaching a painting, goes through a preliminary series of allowances and of (in a certain sense) forgivenesses. These allowances are made so habitually that they frequently become unnoticed, and many will be surprised at remembering that they are made at all. But something like this typic discussion always occurs in practice when one is before a painting for the first time. "Here," says the eye, "is an imitation of a mountain."

"Absurd," replies the judgment, which has often before tested the reports of the eye by reports of the touch, the ear, and other senses, and has learned to correct them accordingly; "the mountain is a mile high, while the canvas is not three feet. But let it pass."

"Here," continues the eye, "is a representation of trees with round trunks, standing at various distances from each other, along a wide landscape."

"Impossible, save by some trick of suggestion," replies the judgment; "for the canvas is flat; and if you look closely you will see that the trees are merely placed higher or lower than each other, the vertical being artfully made to do duty for the horizontal; and the horizontal itself is a mere make-believe; do you not see it is just as near you in reality as the foreground? But let it pass."

Nor is this all. The eye, though defective in the particulars mentioned, is equally effective in others, and in its turn it becomes the critic of the painting. For example: *is* this really like a mountain? queries the eye, and straightway falls to examining the imitation and comparing it with realities. Is this genuine oak-foliage? Would these shadows fall in this manner, and is their value truly estimated and depicted? A thousand such preliminary questions the eye asks. If they are not satisfactorily answered by the painting, it fails at the very start, and there is no use in going further to examine what æsthetic appeal it may make. Through such a vestibule, resisting the chill of these cold intellectual considerations of *vraisemblance*, and sobered by all these allowances and forgivenesses, must every soul pass on to the ultimate purpose and meaning of a picture.

Now, it is easy to conceive a stage of growth of the human spirit when the necessity of making these realistic comparisons would be no hinderance at all, but a refreshment and an advantage. In the mediæval time, for example, when the subtle disquisitions of the schoolmen abandoned the real entirely and busied themselves with pure figments of



human fancy,—when bigotry was piled upon bigotry and fanaticism upon fanaticism until all trace of the actual earth and of actual human nature was obscured,—in such a time, men's minds would experience a sense of relief and of security in contemplating works of art composed of firm and definite forms whose accuracy could be brought to satisfactory tests of actual measurement. Accordingly, we find the artist of the mediæval time to be a painter, seeking refuge from the instabilities and vaguenesses of the prevalent thought of the time in the sharply-outlined figures which he could fix upon his canvas.

These considerations apply with still greater force to the antique time, with its peculiar art of sculpture. In an age when men knew so little of the actual physical world that the main materials and subjects of thought were mere fancies and juggles of ingenious speculators, it must have been a real rest for the mind to fix itself upon the solid and enduring images of undeceptive stone which the artists furnished forth from their wonderful brains and chisels. The need of such rest, though not, of course, consciously recognized by the sculptors, was really the reason of their being. In such matters Nature takes care of her own. She knows the peculiar hunger of an age, and fashions the appropriate satisfactions to it.

Here, now, we are arrived at the crisis of the argument. What has been said of the relations of sculpture and painting to the times in which they flourished is but the special application of a general underlying principle which may be thus stated: The Art of any age will be complementary to the Thought of that age.

In the light of this principle, let us examine the attitude of music towards the present time. *A priori*, one will expect to find that in an age of physical science, when the intellect of man imperiously demands the exact truth of all actual things and is possessed with a holy mania for reality, the characteristic Art will be one affording an outlet from the rigorous fixedness of the actual and of the known into the freer regions of the possible and of the unknown. This reasoning becomes verified as soon as we collate the facts. With sufficient accuracy in view of the size of the terms, it may be said that the rise of modern music has been simultaneous with that of modern physical science. And what more natural? I have endeavored to show that music is of all arts that which has least to do with realism, that which departs most widely from the rigid definitions and firm outlines which the intellect (I use this term always in its strict sense as referring to the cognitive or thinking activity of man, in contradistinction to the emotional or conative activity) demands. In music there is no preliminary allowance to be made by the ear, as was alleged to be made by the eye in painting; there is no forgiveness, in consideration of the impossible; there is no question of *vraisemblance*, no chill of discussion, at the outset. Even in the case of programme-music, where a suggestion is made to the intellect by imitation of familiar sounds, the imitation is, as already shown, really no imitation, does not pretend to be or set up for a *vraisemblant* representation, but is a mere hint, with purposes wholly ulterior to and beyond the small puerility which imitation would be if sought as an end in itself. Moreover, in all cases of pro-

gramme-music, even if the attempt at carrying along the intellect fails, the music as an emotional satisfaction remains. If bad, as a programme, it is still good, as music.

Music, then, being free from the weight and burden of realism,—its whole *modus* being different from that of imitative and plastic art,—its peculiar activity being in the same direction with that of those emotions by which man relates himself (as I hope to show further on) to the infinite,—what more natural than that the spirit of man should call upon it for relief from the pressure and grind of Fact, should cry to it, with earnest pathos, "Come, lead me away out of this labyrinth of the real, the definite, the known, into, or at least towards, the region of the ideal, the infinite, the unknown: knowledge is good, I will continue to thirst and to toil for it, but, alas! I am blind even with the blaze of the sun; take me where there is starlight and darkness, where my eyes shall rest from the duties of verification and my soul shall repose from the labor of knowing."

But this is only a rudimentary statement of the agency of music in modern civilization, intended to bring prominently forward its attitude towards science. The musician is the complement of the scientist. The latter will superintend our knowing; the former will superintend our loving.

I use this last term advisedly, intending by it to advance a step in the investigation of the nature of music. For the mission of music is not merely to be a quietus and lullaby to the soul of a time that is restless with science. This it does, but does as an incident of far higher work.

On an earlier page, the reader's attention was recalled to three classes of activities by which a man relates himself to that part of the universe which is not himself,—namely, the cognitive (or "intellectual," as I have used the term here, not to be too technical for the general reader), the emotional, and the physical. Now, man strives always to place himself in relation not only with those definite forms which go to make up the finite world about him, but also with that indefinite Something up to which every process of reasoning, every outgo of emotion, every physical activity, inevitably leads him,—God, the Infinite, the Unknown. The desire of man is that he may relate himself with the Infinite both in the cognitive and in the emotional way. Sir William Hamilton showed clearly how impossible was any full relation of the former sort, in showing that cognition itself was a conditioning (i.e., a defining, a placing of boundaries appreciable by the intellect), and that therefore the knowing of the Infinite was the conditioning of the Unconditioned,—in short, impossible. This seemed to preclude the possibility of any relation from man to God, of the cognitive sort; but Mr. Herbert Spencer has relieved the blankness of this situation by asserting the possibility of a partial relation still. We cannot think God, it is true; but we can think *towards* Him. This in point of fact is what men continually do. The definition in the catechism, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom," etc., is an effort of man to relate himself to God in the cognitive, or intellectual, way: it is a thinking towards God.

Now, there is a constant endeavor of man, but one to which less attention has been paid by philosophers, to relate himself with the Infinite not only in the cognitive way just described, but also in the emotional way. Just as persistently as our thought seeks the Infinite, does our emotion seek the Infinite. We not only wish to think it, we wish to love it; and as our love is not subject to the disabilities of our thought, the latter of these two wishes would seem to be capable of a more complete fulfilment than the former. It has been shown that we can only think *towards* the Infinite; it may be that our love can reach nearer its Object.

As a philosophic truth, music does carry our emotion towards the Infinite. No man will doubt this who reflects for a moment on the rise of music in the Church. The progress of this remarkable phenomenon will have probably come, in some way, under the notice of the youngest person who will read this paper.

I remember when the most flourishing church of our town regarded with intense horror a proposition to buy an organ, considering it an insidious project of the devil to undermine religion. The same church has now the largest organ in the city, with a paid organist and choir. Scarcely any person who has lived in the smaller towns of the United States but will recall similar instances. At present the organ, the song, are in all the growing churches. What would be Mr. Moody without Mr. Sankey, or Mr. Whittle without Mr. Bliss?

And not only does music win its way into the Church, but it gradually takes on more and more importance in the service of worship. How many are there in these days to whom the finest preaching comes from the organ-loft! Greater and greater every year grow the multitudes of those who declare that no sermons, no words, no forms of any sort, avail to carry them on the way towards the desired sacred goal as do the tones of Palestrina, of Bach, of Beethoven, when these are given forth by any organist of even moderate accomplishment. Everywhere one finds increasing the number of fervent souls who fare easily by this road to the Lord. From the negro swaying to and fro with the weird rhythms of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," from the Georgia Cracker yelling the "Old Ship of Zion" to the heavens through the logs of the piney-woods church, to the intense devotee rapt away into the Infinite upon a mass of Palestrina, there comes but one testimony to the substantial efficacy of music in this matter of helping the emotion of man across the immensity of the known into the boundaries of the Unknown. Nay, there are those who go further than this: there are those who declare that music is to be the Church of the future, wherein all creeds will unite like the tones in a chord.

Now, it cannot be that music has taken this place in the deepest and holiest matters of man's life through mere fortuitous arrangement. It must be that there exists some sort of relation between pure tones and the spirit of man by virtue of which the latter is stimulated and forced onward towards the great End of all love and aspiration. What may be the nature of this relation,—why it is that certain vibrations sent forward by the tympanum along the bones and fluids of the inner ear should at length arrive at the spirit of man endowed with such a pro-

digions and heavenly energy,—at what point of the course they acquire this capacity of angels, being, up to that point, mere particles trembling hither and thither,—these are, in the present state of our knowledge, mysteries which no man can unravel.

It is through this relation of music to man that it becomes, as I said in the principles affirmed at the outset, a moral agent. Let us not pester ourselves with remembering how such and such a musician was a profligate, a beast, a trifle, and so on. This is only submitting ourselves to what our wise Emerson calls the tyranny of particulars. The clear judgment in the matter is to be formed by looking at the consummate masters of the art.

Palestrina, Bach, Beethoven,—what had these gentlemen to do with sheriffs and police, with penalties and legal sanctions? They were law-abiding citizens; but their adherence to the law was the outcome of an inner desire after the beauty of Order, not from fear of the law's punitive power.

In short, they were artists, and they loved goodness because goodness is beautiful. Badness was not a temptation, because it is ugly, and the true artist recoils energetically from ugliness.

I know very well how many names there are in art which are associated with profligacy. But I think it clearly demonstrable that in all these artists there was a failure in the artistic sense precisely to the extent of the failure in apprehending those enormous laws of nature whose practical execution by the individual we call morality. You can always see where the half-way good man was but the half-way artist.

One hears all about the world nowadays that art is wholly un-moral, that art is for art's sake, that art has nothing to do with good or bad in behavior. These are the cries of clever men whose cleverness can imitate genius so aptly as to persuade many that they have genius, and whose smartness can preach so incisively about art that many believe them to be artists. But such catch-words will never deceive the genius, the true artist. The true artist will never remain a bad man; he will always wonder at a wicked artist. The simplicity of this wonder renders it wholly impregnable. The argument of it is merely this: the artist loves beauty supremely: because the good is beautiful, he will clamber continuously towards it, through all possible sloughs, over all possible obstacles, in spite of all possible falls.

This is the artist's creed. Now, just as music increases in hearty acceptance among men, so will this true artistic sense of the loveliness of morality spread, so will the attractiveness of all that is pure and lovely grow in power, and so will the race progress towards that time described in the beginning of this essay as one in which the law would cease to rely upon terror for its sanction, but depend wholly upon love and desire.

If any ask whether there are signs of such a beneficial spreading of music among the general classes of men, one has but to reply, Look around. In the first place, there is the wonderful growth of music in the churches, which has already been spoken of. But that is only half the phenomenon. Turn from the churches into the homes of the United States. It is often asserted that ours is a materialistic age, and



that romance is dead. But this is marvellously untrue, and it may be counter-asserted with perfect confidence that there was never an age of the world when art was enthroned by so many hearthstones and intimate in so many common houses as now. For the pianos are almost everywhere. Where there are not pianos, there are cabinet-organs; and where not these, the guitars; not to speak of the stray violins, the flutes, the horns, the clarinets, which lie about in houses here and there and are brought out on the nights when the sister is home from boarding-school or when the village orchestra meets. These pianos have done a great work for music. No one who knows the orchestra well can admit the piano for itself as a final good, because it is an instrument of fixed tones and therefore imperfect; but when one thinks of the incalculable service which the piano has rendered in diffusing conceptions of harmony (which is the distinguishing characteristic of modern music) among the masses, one must regard it with reverent affection.

Never was any art so completely a household art as is the music of to-day; and the piano has made this possible.

As the American is, with all his shortcomings of other sorts, at any rate most completely the man of to-day, so it is directly in the line of this argument to say that one finds more "talent for music" among the Americans, especially among American women, than among any other people. The musical sense is very widely diffused among us, and the capacity for musical execution is strikingly frequent.

When Americans shall have learned the supreme value and glory of the orchestra,—when we shall have advanced beyond the piano, which is, as matters now exist, a quite necessary stage in musical growth,—when our musical young women shall have found that, if their hands are too small for the piano, or if they have no voices, they can study the flute, the violin, the oboe, the bassoon, the viola, the violoncello, the horn, the corno Inglese,—in short, every orchestral instrument,—and that they are quite as capable as men—in some cases much better fitted by nature than any man—to play all these, then I look to see America the home of the orchestra, and to hear everywhere the profound messages of Beethoven and Bach to men.

Meantime, what shall we say of an art which thus is becoming so much the daily companion of man as to sit by every fireside and in every church,—nay, which, I might have added, thrusts itself into the crowded streets in a thousand shapes, wherever the newsboy whistles, the running clerk hums the bass he is to sing in the chorus, the hand-organ drones, the street-band blares, which presides at weddings, at feasts, at great funerals, which marches at the head of battle, and opens the triumphant ceremonials of peace?

As for Beethoven, it is only of late that his happy students have begun to conceive the true height and magnitude of his nature. The educational value of his works upon the understanding soul which has yielded itself to the rapture of their teaching is unspeakable, and is of a sort which almost compels a man to shed tears of gratitude at every mention of this master's name. For in these works are many qualities which one could not expect to find cohering in any one human spirit.

Taking Beethoven's sonatas (which, by the way, no one will ever properly appreciate until he regards them really as symphonies and mentally distributes the parts among flutes, reeds, horns, and strings as he goes through them), his songs, his symphonies, together, I know not where one will go to find in any human products such largeness, such simplicity, such robust manliness, such womanly tenderness, such variety of invention, such parsimony of means with such splendor of effects, such royal grandeur without pretence, such pomp with such modesty, such unfailing moderation and exquisite right feeling in art, such prodigious transformations and re-transformations of the same melody,—as if the blue sky should alternately shrink into a blue violet and then expand into a sky again,—such love-making to the infinite and the finite, such range of susceptibility, such many-sidedness in offering some gift to every nature and every need, such comprehension of the whole of human life.

There is but one name to which one can refer in speaking of Beethoven: it is Shakespeare.

For as Shakespeare is, so far, our king of conventional tones, so is Beethoven our king of unconventional tones. And as music takes up the thread which language drops, so it is where Shakespeare ends that Beethoven begins.

### DING DONG.

**W**HEN the world grows old by the chimney-side,  
Then forth to the youngling rocks I glide,  
Where over the water and over the land  
The bells are booming on either hand.

#### *Andante.*

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,  
And awhile they swing to the same old song;  
For the metal goes round to a single bound,  
A-cutting the fields with its measured sound,  
While the tired tongues fall with a lengthened boom  
As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.

#### *Allegro.*

Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,  
And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,  
For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,  
And the breeze wafts the loud ding dong along.

When the echo hath reached me in this lone vale,  
I am straightway a hero in coat of mail.  
I tug at my belt and I march on my post,  
And feel myself more than a match for a host.

## MR. SONNENSCHN'S INHERITANCE.

## I.

## SCHLEMIEL.

**T**HE English language very likely possesses an equivalent for the Jüdisch word Schlemiel; but I have tried in vain to find it. Briefly, a Schlemiel is a person who never prospers, with whom everything goes wrong. Born under an evil star, or with a leaden spoon in his mouth, he is constitutionally unsuccessful. Misfortune has marked him for her own; ill luck accompanies him through life. The witty Jewish author Leopold Kompert says that while other people seize opportunities by the head, the Schlemiel lays hold of them by the foot, and allows them to wriggle and kick themselves loose. Put gold into the hands of your Schlemiel, adds Kompert, it turns to copper. Let him purchase a cask of wine; when he opens the spigot, vinegar gushes forth. Yet, of all mortal men, the Schlemiel is usually the best-natured, the lightest-hearted. A perpetual sunny smile illuminates his face. He seems to regard his sorry destiny as an excellent practical joke, at which, though it be at his own expense, he can laugh as well as another. Calamity is his native element. He is impervious to it. He minds it no more than a salamander minds fire, or a duck water. The Lord shapes the back to the burden. That same careless and irresponsible temperament which is constantly bringing the Schlemiel to grief, enables him to accept it with a shrug. Not but that, once in a while, you may meet a melancholy, even a crabbed and misanthropic, Schlemiel; but he will also be a highly exceptional Schlemiel.

By his own admission, as well as by the judgment of his friends, Emmanuel Sonnenschein was a Schlemiel. "I ain't no goot," he used to say, with an hilarious twinkle in his eye. "I ain't got no sense. I'm a raikular Schlemiel." He was a very old man, white, and bent, and wrinkled; but, though he rather prided himself upon his age, and loved to prate about it, the exact figure of it he would never tell. He had been in this country a great many years; and that again was a subject of pride with him; but again, for some unimaginable reason, he chose to make a secret of the date of his immigration.

"Old!" he would exclaim, lifting his hands toward the ceiling, and swinging his head from side to side in that peculiarly Jewish manner. "Old! Gott in Himmel! . . . Vail, Saimmy,"—he always called me Saimmy, never would Mister me, having made my acquaintance when I was in swaddling-clothes,—“vail, Saimmy, I don't suppose you aifer knew nobody so old as me. Vail, if I told you my aich, you'd be aistonished; you would, honor bright. You'd be frightened, Saimmy; it's fearful, it simply is. Or else, I guess maybe you wouldn't belief me; you'd tink I was trying to fool you. Vail, ainyhow, I von't say anudder vord about it; but I tell you fat you can do. You can bet a hat dot I'm vun of de very oldest shentlemen de Lord aifer

mait; you can bet a hat on dot. . . . Oh, yais, I been in dis country an awful long time already,—longer as you yourself, dough you vas born here. I come ofer fen I vas kervite a young feller, not more as terventy-five or tirty; and I've krown oop mit de country. Yais, I vent into de paitling business right away aifer I lainded, and I've paittled on and oaff aifer since. My kracious, I've paittled pretty much aiferydings a party could; hair-oil, and coaton lace, and maitches, and insect-powter, and letter-paper, and pins and neetles, and chewelry, and toilet-soap, and suspainters, and toot-ache droaps, and marking-ink, and ague cure, and Yainkee notions; but I ain't naifer mait no money; I ain't naifer haid no luck; I vas a raikular Schlemiel. . . . Vail, I vas a pretty old shentleman already fen I got mairried; dot vas in eighteen-hoonert-sixty. Den in sixty-vun my dowter Nettie vas born, and my vife she died. Vail, I guess maybe if my vife haid lived, I guess maybe I got rich. She vas vun of de very smartest ladies in de United States. She haid sense enough for a whole faimily. But I didn't naifer haif no kind of luck; and fen Nettie vas born, my vife she died. I vas a raikular Schlemiel, dere's no two vays about it. Vail, it vas shust exactly tree weeks aifterwards, fen Nettie vas shust exactly tree weeks old, vun day I vas cairrying her oop and down de room, to stoap her crying,—fen I let her droap on de floor, and her spine got inchured, and she's been a cripple aifer since. I couldn't help it, Saimmy; I couldn't, honor bright. I felt awful about it. *Mein Gott*, I cut my throat sooner as done it! But I couldn't help it, no more as I could help de color of my hair. I vas a Schlemiel. . . . Vail, Saimmy, you vas born in dot same year,—eighteen-sixty-vun,—vasn't you? Yais, you and Nettie vas shust about de same aich. But, *lieber Herr*, fat a difference! You—rich, hainsome, healty! Nettie—poor, crippled, bait-ritten all her life! And it vasn't your fault dot you got dem advaintaches, no more as it vas her fault dot she ain't got 'em. Vail, dis is a funny vorld; but de Lord is goot; and I suppose he's got some reason for it. . . . My kracious, Saimmy, don't I remaimber de day you vas born, and how glaid your popper feel dot you vasn't a kirl! He vas simply delighted, Saimmy, he simply vas. Fen I look at you now,—so tall and hainsome, and mit dot graind mustache and aiferydings,—vail, honor bright, I couldn't hartly belief it. Vail, dis is a vunderful vorld; it is, and no mistake. Vail, Saimmy, how's your mommer?"

## II.

## SCHLEMIEL'S EXPECTATIONS.

He lived with his crippled daughter Nettie up several flights of dark and rickety stairs, in a tenement-house overlooking Tompkins Square. Nettie passed her life between her bed and her easy-chair. Mr. Sonnenschein did the house-work,—cooked the meals and washed the dishes, made the beds and kept the quarters clean. Nettie's fingers were the only members of her disabled body that remained fit for service. These she busied from morning till night each day, crocheting tidies and pillow-shams and such like articles,—marvellous in their expert workmanship and in their unexampled ugliness,—which her



father would "paittle" from door to door through the town, thus eking out a meagre livelihood. At our house he turned up as often as three or four times a year, bringing specimens of Nettie's handicraft in abundance sufficient to last a generation. We always bought them at his own appraisement; but what my mother did with them I cannot say. This much is certain, she never allowed them to appear about the house. Perhaps she presented them *en bloc* to the next peddler who came along; perhaps she had them used as kindlings for the fires. Poor Nettie! that she should have wasted so much skill and so much labor upon such useless and unbeautiful creations!

Mr. Sonnenschein commonly arrived just as we had finished dinner, while we were getting into sympathy with our newly-lighted cigars. We would install him at the table,—for in respect of that virtue which ranks second only to godliness he was unimpeachable,—fill his plate and his wineglass, and wait expectantly for the good cheer to loosen his tongue. By and by, face fairly radiant of benevolence, he would lean back in his chair, heave a mighty sigh of satisfaction, wipe the tears of enjoyment from his eyes (with his napkin), and the unruly member would begin to wag. I always enjoyed listening to him, he was so simple-minded and so optimistic.

"Vail, now, dis is a funny world, Saimmy; it is, and no mistake. Yais, it's an awful funny world, dere ain't no use in talking. Vail, now look at here. I vas a Schlemiel,—hey? Dere ain't no kervation about dot,—I vas a Schlemiel. Vail, now look at here. Maybe you wouldn't belief me,—you might tink I vas trying to fool you,—but, honor bright, I got a brudder ofer in Chairmany who's vun of de very luckiest shentlemen dot vas aifer born. Now, ain't dot funny? . . . His name is Shakie, and me and him vas tervins. Vail, I suppose dere vasn't goot luck enough to go around beterveen us; so Shakie he got it all, and I didn't get ainy. All de same, I leaf it to you if it ain't awful funny. . . . Vail, Shakie, he vas so fearful lucky, he vent into de chewelry business, and he got rich. Vail, I don't know shust exactly how rich he vas; I ain't naifer aisked him. But I don't belief he's vort less as fifty or a hoonert tousand tollars. Vail, of course, he might not be vort more as terventy-five or tirty tousand. But he's an awful rich shentleman anyhow; you can bet a hat on dot. Vail, Shakie he ain't naifer got mairried, nor haid no children; so fen he dies I get his money. Vail, he cain't expect to live very much longer, for he's a fearful old man by dis time already, and it ain't necheral dot he should live to get much older. Him and me vas tervins; so he's shust exactly as old as me; and you ain't got no idea how old dot is. Vail, I'll feel awful sorry fen Shakie dies; yais, I'll feel simply terrible; but he cain't expect to live much longer,—he's so fearful old,—and I'll be glaid to get dot money on account of Nettie. I don't care two cents about money on my own account; I don't, honor bright. But poor little Nettie, she's haid such a hart time of it all her life, I'll be glaid fen I get money enough to let her live in comfort. . . . Vail, Saimmy, my brudder Shakie he's an awful goot-hearted shentleman, and he's got a lot of family feeling about him; and I suppose if I wrote him a letter to-morrer, and aisked him to

make me a present of a thousand tollars,—vail, I suppose Shakie he'd said it to me by returnermail; he's an old bechelor, you know, and he's got so much family feeling. But I ain't naifer asked him for vun single cent. No, sir; I go to de poor-house sooner as ask my brudder Shakie for a haif a tollar. Dot's becoase I'm so prout. You ain't got no idea how prout I am. Dere ain't no use in talking, I shouldn't vunder if I vas about de proutest shentleman de Lord aifer mait. And dot's the reason I wouldn't ask no favors of my brudder Shakie. I wouldn't let him know dot I ain't so rich as himself, not for ten hoonert thousand tollars,—I'm so fearful prout. Fy, Saimmy, my brudder Shakie he don't dream dot I vas a Schlemiel. Vail, I guesa maybe if he knew dot,—he's got so much family feeling about him,—I guess maybe if Shakie knew dot, it would break his heart."

"Well, Mr. Sonnenschein," my mother would presently inquire, "what has Nettie been doing lately? I hope you have brought some of her things with you to show us,"—thus proving herself to be a consummate hypocrite, though from the kindest motives.

His hands would fly up toward the ceiling; his head would begin to sway from side to side; and, "Ach, Nettie!" he would cry in response. "Nettie! She's a born vunder! Industrious ain't no vord for it. She's de graindest vorker in de United States, she simply is. Vork, vork, vork, from de time she vakes oop in de morning till she goes to sleep again at night! I naifer seen nodings like it in all my life before. It's fearful. And such a talent! I don't know fere she gets it. Vail, I guess maybe she gets it from her mommer. Yais, my vife vas vun of de very smartest ladies de Lord aifer mait; and I guess maybe dot's how my dowter Nettie gets her talent. Vail, she's been vorking a new paattern lately, fih she mait oop out of her own hait. It's de most maiknificent ting she aifer done; it's elegant; it's immense. I got it in tidies and piller-shajms and table-maits and bait-kervilts. You'll fall daid in loaf mit it; I bet a hat on dot. Hold on."

Therewith he would open his pack, and display his treasures, going into raptures of enthusiasm over them. "Ain't dey splendid? Ain't dey serveet? Ain't my dowter got a chenu-wine talent?" etc., etc. He was generosity incarnate, was Mr. Sonnenschein; and after we had satisfied our consciences by the purchase of tidies enough to fit out a colony, he would throw in two or three extra ones, as he explained, "for loaf." Our protestations to the effect that he mustn't rob himself he would quickly silence, crying, "Don't mention it. Don't say anudder vord about it. Dere ain't nodings stinchy about me. Goot maisure, small proafits, kervick sales,—dot's my motter. Take 'em and vailcome. You say anudder vord about it, I trow in some more." That threat was effectual. We took them.

### III.

#### SCHLEMIEL'S PRUDENCE.

Yes, his habit was to drop in upon us not seldomer than three or four times a year; but a period of quite six months had elapsed, and he had given us no sign of life, and we were beginning to wonder what

had become of him,—when, one blustering evening in November, at his usual hour, he entered our dining-room.

From the instant we laid eyes upon him we knew that something extraordinary was in the wind. His accoutrement proclaimed as much, and so did the profound dejection that was painted upon his face. Instead of the motley assortment of other people's superannuated garments in which we were wont to see him clad, he wore a brand-new suit of broadcloth. A black cravat encircled his gnarled and ancient throat. In his hand he carried a glossy stove-pipe hat, with a crape band about it; and under his arm, an oblong thickish parcel, neatly done up in paper, and tied with pink twine; while the badge and instrument of his profession, his accustomed pack, was nowhere to be seen. His countenance, as I have said, bespoke a deep and consuming melancholy.

"Why, Mr. Sonnenschein!" exclaimed my mother, starting up in alarm and advancing to meet him. "What has happened? What's the matter? Is—has—is Nettie——"

"No," he interrupted, with a solemn gesture and in a sepulchral voice. "No, it ain't Nettie. No, tank de Lord, it ain't so baid as dot. But it's fearful all de same. It's my brudder,—it's my brudder Shakie."

"What!" we all cried in concert. "He's dead?"

"Yais," replied Mr. Sonnenschein, sinking into a chair, the picture of a man prostrated and undone by grief. "Yais, he's daid, my brudder Shakie's daid." After a brief pause, in a sudden passionate outburst: "Ach Gott, and ve vas tervins!"

He bowed his head, and for a little while his sorrow seemed to deprive him of the power of speech. The rest of us, too, kept silence. We were surprised to see him so painfully affected, but we were also very much impressed.

Presently he raised his head, and slowly, in a shaken voice, went on: "Yais, Shakie's daid. It's about two monts ago already I got de news. Vail, it pretty nearly broke my heart. Him and me vas tervins. . . . Poor Shakie! He vas an awful *goot*-hearted shentleman, and he hadn't oughter been taken away. Oh, vail, I suppose his time haid come. He vas fearful old; and I guess maybe his time haid come. He couldn't expect to live foraiser; his time haid come; and so he haid to die. Vail, dis is a hart world; an outracheous hart world, dere's no two vays about it: but de Lord mait it, and I suppose he haid some reason for it. *Boruch dajir emes!*" With that pious ejaculation,—Blessed be the Most High Judge,—he again bowed his head, and held his peace.

Some minutes passed in unbroken silence. Then, all at once, Mr. Sonnenschein drew a deep loud sigh and straightened up. He gave his shoulders a prodigious shrug, as if to shake off his spiritual burden; he passed his hands over his face, as if to wipe away the shadows that darkened it. . . . Abruptly, with a sudden change of mien and manner,—eyes lighted by their familiar happy smile,—voice vibrant with its familiar jubilant ring,—"But I got de money," he cried. "I got terventy-nine thousand, seven hoonert and sixty tollars; and I've come ofer

to haif you conkratulate me. I only got it de day before yesterday, or I'd haif come around sooner. I hope you von't mind, but I brought a couple bottles champagne along, to celebrate mit. You folks, you been awful friendly to me fen I vas poor already, and you vas raikular customers of mine; so, now I vas rich, I tought I like to give you a little treat."

With that he undid the mysterious paper parcel which we had noticed at his entrance, and produced surely enough a couple of bottles of champagne.

"Fill oop your glaisses," he urged. "Fill 'em oop. Don't be afraid of it. It's chenu-wine. Vail, here goes! *Shalom alechem!* Peace to you! Drink hearty. Dere's plenty more fere dot comes from."

The gayety of the company was speedily restored, and we drank to our old friend's prosperity with right good will.

"Yais," he said, smacking his lips upon a bumper of his wine, "I got de money de day before yesterday. I got a draift on de baining establishment of Schaumberg, Knaus, Bauer & Co., down in Villiam Street. I ain't haif it caished yet. Dere it is."

He had unbuttoned his coat, and extracted from its inside pocket a dilapidated leather wallet. Out of this he picked his draft, and handed it to me for circulation around the table. The amount was, as he had said, \$29,760.

"Well, Mr. Sonnenschein," my father asked, "how do you propose to invest this money? Can I be of any assistance to you in attending to its investment?"

"Vail, no, I guess not, tank you," he returned. "It's awful goot-nechered of you to make de offer; but I guess not, tank you all de same. No; to tell you de honest troot, I don't make no investments of dot money; I keep de caish. You see, I vas a Schlemiel. Vail, a Schlemiel is a party who's bount to haif bait luck. Vail, if I put dot money in de baink, de first ting I know, de baink 'll bust. Or else, if I buy stoacks mit it, de stoack company vill fail; or coverment boants, de coverment vill get into a var. If I put it in a mowgage on real estate, de title to dot real estate would be defaicted. Dere's no two vays about it. I vas a Schlemiel. No, sir, I don't make no investments of dot money; I be sure to lose it, dere ain't no use in talking. But I tell you fat I do. I tought it all ofer in my own mind, and now I tell you fat I do. To-morrer morning I go down-town, and I call at de office of Schaumberg, Knaus, Bauer & Co., in Villiam Street, and I get dot draift caished,—hey? Vail, den I take dot caish baick oop-town again mit me; and I go to my friend Mr. Solomon Levinson, who keeps a second-haint clodings establishment in de basement of de house I live in; and I aisk Mr. Levinson to put dot caish in his chenu-wine burglar-proof safe, and keep it for me,—you understand? Vail, den fen me and Nettie needs some money, den I go to dot safe, and I take out a hoonert tollars,—you see de point? Tirty tousand tollars! My kracious, dot's enough to laist me and Nettie longer as ve eider of us lives; it is, honor bright. Ve ain't extraivagant, and ve ain't got no heirs to feel disappointed if ve don't leaf no fortune. No, sir; I



vas a Schlemiel. I don't make no investments of dot money; I be sure to lose it. I keep de caish."

Unanimously and vehemently we protested against this course. We labored long and hard to convince him of its rash unwisdom. We assured him that of all the possible dispositions of his money which he could make, this was the wildest, the most hazardous; and we invoked every argument by which a reasonable human being could be moved to vindicate our proposition.

He heard us respectfully to the end, while a tolerant smile played about his lips. Then he rejoined, "Dot's all right. Fat you folks say is shust exactly so. You got an awful lot of sense about you, and you arkue simply splendid,—especially Saimmy. My kracious, if Saimmy vas to go to de laichislature, he'd make a chenu-wine sensation, he arkues so goot. He vas a necheral debater, dere's no two ways about it. But I tell you how it is. Dere's a proverb fih goes, 'Circumstainces alter cases.' Vail, dot's an aictual faict; dey do, and no mistake. Vail, now I tell you how it is. You see, I vas a Schlemiel. Vail, a Schlemiel is a party who's bount to haif bait luck. Vail, if I make ainy investments of dot money, I be sure to lose it; I would, honor bright. So, I don't make no investments of it. I don't run no risks. I keep de caish."

So that, despite the splendor of our arguments, we might as well have addressed them to a stone post. Finally, in despair of reaching his intelligence, we appealed to his good-nature, imploring him, if not for his own sake, if not for Nettie's, then for ours, to intrust the practical management of his inheritance to more experienced heads.

Again he heard us patiently to the end. Then he made answer, "You folks, you're awful friendly to take so much trouble on my account; you simply are. And I'm fearful much obliged to you, and so would Nettie be if she vas here. But I tell you how it is. You see, I vas a Schlemiel. Vail, if a party's a Schlemiel, dere ain't no use in talking, he's bount to haif bait luck. Vail, if I invest dot money, I be aibolutely sure to lose it, I would, and no mistake. So, I stay on de safe side. I don't run no risks. I keep de caish."

"Look here, Mr. Sonnenschein," my father said at last; "you buy government bonds with your money, and I'll insure you against all possible loss, by making myself personally responsible in case of anything happening. If the government gets into a war, or repudiates its debt, or if through any other cause the bonds shrink in value, I'll pay you from my own pocket the full amount of your losses. Come, that would render you perfectly secure."

"My kracious!" cried Mr. Sonnenschein. "Talk about goot-necher! Vail, dot beats de record. I naifer seen nobody so goot-nechered as you are in all my life before. It's vunderful, it simply is. I guess maybe you vas about de best-nechered shentleman dot vas aifer born; I do, honor bright. But I tell you how it is. You see, I vas a Schlemiel. Vail, if I invest dot money, I be sure to lose it vun vay or anudder, dere ain't no kervation about it. Vail, you don't suppose I vant to make an old friend like you lose his money too! No, sir; not much; I ain't so mean as dot. But I tell you fat I do.

I tought it all ofer, and now I tell you fat I mait oop my mind to do. I keep de caish. Mr. Levinson's burglar-proof safe is goot enough for me."

And so he went away, leaving us in an exasperated and anxious frame of mind. We tried hard to hope for the best; but how could we help fearing the worst? To invite disaster by keeping so large a sum of ready money lying exposed in another man's safe,—who but a Schlemiel could be guilty of such unmitigated folly?

## IV.

## SCHLEMIEL'S PEN.

It was rather more than a week later that the post brought me one morning a letter, written in a cramped foreign hand, of which the following is a true and perfect copy:

"DIER SAMMY!

"ime Konfeint to de Haus bei a fieful Kolt an de het and Lonks and, i Kand go autt for fier i gett vurs But i laik, to sie You as i got a Fieful gut schoke to tell you and Den annyhau Ime lonsum and i laik to Sie you for Kumpny to schier Me up vel days ane ole vumin of de nehmer rebekah doz our Haus vork for Us and her and nettie is Die onelie piepul i sie Ole Day so i gett Kein der Lonsum and i laik to sie you to tell You dat Schoke vel ittul mehkh you Laff to dei sammy it vil and no mistek vel if a parties a Schlemiel day ant no Yous in toking Hies gott to haf bat luck. vel kum sie Me sammy for i gess Mabie mei time is com i do on a Brite, ime a fieful ole Gentulmin you no and de Doktor sais I Gott a bat kase Braun Kietiz, Kom sie me enyhau de Doktor sed, it ant Kesching. giv my Lof papa and mama your

"Gut Frent

"E. SONNENSCHN!"

I found this epistle lying in wait for me on the breakfast-table. After I had made what sense of it I could, I passed it over to my mother, saying, "I'll stop in and see him on my way down-town."

"I'll go with you," my mother volunteered, some fifteen minutes later, after the sensation created by the exhibition to the rest of the family of Mr. Sonnenschein's effort had subsided. "Poor old man! Perhaps there's something I can do to make him comfortable."

So, together, my mother and I set out for Tompkins Square.

## V.

## SCHLEMIEL'S "SCHOKE."

Our greeting over, and our inquiries concerning the exact state of his health satisfactorily answered (he had indeed a bad cold, but was not nearly so ill as we had feared to find him): "Vail, now, Saimmy," began Mr. Sonnenschein, "as I told you a great mainy times already, dis is a vunderful vorld. By and by, fen you get so old as me, you'll

say de same ting; dough now, file you're young, you might imachine dot I vas only fooling. My kracious, fen I tink about how vunderful it really is,—vail, Saimmy, I'm aictually aistonished,—vail, honor bright, I cain't hartly belief it. Vail, now look at here. I vas a Schlemiel, hey? Vail, a Schlemiel is a party who's bount to haif bait luck, ain't he? No maitter fat he does, no maitter fat pre-cowtions he takes, he cain't help it; he's got to haif bait luck. Vail, now look at here. It's shust exactly about two veeks ago already I got dot draift from de *eggs*-hecutor of my brudder Shakie ofer in Chairmany. Vail, I guess maybe I told you I wasn't going to make no investments of dot money, becoase, as I vas a Schlemiel, I be sure to lose it. I guess maybe I told you I vas going to keep de caish. Yais, I tought it all ofer, and I mait oop my mind dot I better stay on de safe side and keep de caish. Vail, now look at here. De very next day aifter I seen you, I vent down-town to de office of Schaumberg, Knaus, Bauer & Co., in Villiam Street, and I got dot draift caished. I got terventy-nine vun-tousand-tollar pills, vun fife-hoonert-tollar pill, two vun-hoonert-tollar pills, and de ott sixty tollars in fifes and tens. Vail, Saimmy, den I done all dot money oop, except dose ott sixty tollars, fih I kep in my poacket, I done it all oop mit paper in a poontle, and I vent to my friend Mr. Solomon Levinson, who keeps a second-haint clodings establishment down-stairs in de basement; and I asked Mr. Levinson to put dot poontle inside his chenuwine burglar-proof safe and keep it for me; and Mr. Levinson he done it. He put it inside on de toap shelf, file I stood dere and seen him. Vail, Saimmy, Mr. Levinson he's got a lot of curiosity about him, fih is only necheral; and so, as I vas leafing, Mr. Levinson he asked me if I haid ainy *op*-shections to informing him fat dot poontle contained. Vail, I tought to myself, 'I guess maybe I better not let nobody know how much money dere is in dot poontle;' so I said to Mr. Levinson, 'Fy, certainly; I ain't got no *op*-shections. It contains old loaf-letters.' Dot's fat I said to Mr. Levinson. Vail, dot was pretty goot for an oaff-hainder, wasn't it, Saimmy? Vail, now look at here. Vail, I suppose you'd tink dere wasn't vun chaine in a hoonert tousand of ainydings haippening to dot money, now it vas loacked oop in Mr. Levinson's burglar-proof safe, vouldn't you, Saimmy? Vail, now look at here. Now you'll see shust exactly how it is fen a party's a Schlemiel. You'll see fat a vunderful world dis is. Vail, de day Mr. Levinson put dot money inside his safe vas Friday. Vail, den it stainds to reason de next day vas Schabbas (Sabbath); don't it, Saimmy? Vail, maybe you vouldn't belief me,—you might tink I vas trying to fool you,—but, honor bright,—I hope to die de next minute if it ain't a faict,—dot very same night,—Sotturday night,—aifter ve vas gone to bait,—vail, Saimmy, I bet you a brain-new fife tollar silk hat you cain't guess fat haippened. You take de bet? No? You gif it oop? Hey? Vail, now look at here. Dot very same night,—Sotturday night,—vail, Mr. Levinson he haid a fire in his establishment, and my money got burned oop,—aifery red cent of it got burned to cinters!"

Of course we cried out in horror and consternation. But we had

no words in our vocabulary eloquent enough to do justice to the catastrophe; and we very soon relapsed into a dazed and helpless silence. Then Mr. Sonnenschein went placidly on: "Vail, it *was* hart luck, outracheous hart luck, dot's an aictual faict. It *was* raikular Schlemiel's luck, dere's no two vays about it. But fat could you expect? It *was* bount to haippen. I *was* bount to lose dot money vun vay or anudder, dere ain't no use in talking. Vail, you got to learn in dis vorld to take tings as dey come and part mit 'em as dey go; dot's all dere is about it. Vail, now look at here. Now I tell you de particulars. Dem's de funniest part of de whole business."

The particulars were simple enough. Between eleven and twelve o'clock on Saturday night he and Nettie had been roused from their sleep by firemen breaking into their apartment and announcing that the house *was* afire. The firemen carried Nettie to the street, Mr. Sonnenschein following. The fire, it seemed, had started in Mr. Levinson's "establishment," and before it had gained much headway the firemen succeeded in putting it out. The tenants were then allowed to return to their beds. "Dot's how I caught dis case brownchitis, setting still outside dere in de street, fih *was* fearful cold, mitout no clodings on to speak of, file de firemen dey put dot fire out." It never once entered Mr. Sonnenschein's head to fear that his fortune *was* in danger, for "I tought of course it *was* loacked oop in Mr. Levinson's chenu-wine burglar- and fire-proof safe." But the next morning Mr. Levinson came to see him, and explained that, as his safe had been somewhat crowded with matter the day before, he had removed Mr. Sonnenschein's bundle of old letters and placed it in the cupboard of his writing-desk. "And den, of course, as I *was* a Schlemiel, dot establishment haid to ketch fire, and dot writing-desk, mit aiferydings inside of it, get burned oop. Raikular Schlemiel's luck, ain't it, Saimmy? . . . Vail, after all, it don't make much difference. Fen I got dot money I mait oop my mind dot I'd retire from business, and be a shentleman of leisure. Vail, now I simply got to go baick into business again; dot's all dere is about it."

## VI.

## SCHLEMIEL'S FRIEND.

My mother and I parted company at Mr. Sonnenschein's door, she to return home, I to pursue my downward journey to my office. As I walked along, however, an idea, a suspicion, began to wax strong in my mind; dominated by which, I presently changed my course, and, entering the head-quarters of the Fire Department, in Mercer Street, asked to see the Fire-Marshal, Mr. Sparks, a gentleman with whom I *was* fortunate enough to have some personal acquaintance. Two minutes later he and I *was* closeted together.

"I dare say you remember a fire that occurred last Saturday night, up on Tompkins Square, in the shop of a second-hand clothing-dealer, named Levinson?" I inquired.

"Yes," the Fire Marshal answered. "I remember it."

"Well, would you mind telling me whether there *was* anything



suspicious about it?—whether there were any circumstances to indicate that it was of incendiary origin?"

"Whenever a fire occurs in premises occupied by a gentleman of Mr. Levinson's race, class, and profession, I may say it is suspicious. Those low-class Polish Jews think no more of setting fire to a house, if they've anything to gain by it, than they do of lying. But in this particular case suspicion is disarmed by the fact that Levinson, strange to say, carried no insurance. So, you see, we have no evidence of motive. Why do you ask?"

"Well, I'll tell you. On the day before the fire,—that is, on Friday,—an old man named Sonnenschein deposited a very large sum of money—thirty thousand dollars, indeed, in greenbacks—with this Levinson for safe-keeping. After the fire, Levinson claimed that Sonnenschein's money had been burned up. Now it occurred to me that perhaps Levinson had quietly pocketed the thirty thousand dollars, and then kindled the fire to account for its disappearance. If this supposition is reasonable, the fact that he carried no insurance doesn't signify."

"By Jupiter!" cried the Fire Marshal, thumping his desk. "That's the missing link. Tell me every detail of this transaction. I begin to see light."

I told him the whole story.

"Why, it's as clear as day," was his comment, when I had finished. "We'll have Levinson on his knees here before us within half an hour." And Mr. Sparks left the room.

When he came back, a minute or two later, he explained that he had sent a messenger to Mr. Levinson's place of business, with an invitation to that worthy to favor the Fire Marshal with his company at once. "Now, you sit down behind this screen," he said to me, "where you can see without being seen. Levinson must fancy that he is alone with me. I think I can promise you some entertainment."

In due time the door opened, and Mr. Levinson was ushered in: a short, thick-set individual, with bushy black hair and beard, sallow complexion, and low, squat, oily features. His small black eyes darted inquiringly from side to side; his fingers, fat and stubby, toyed with the brim of his hat; and about his mouth flickered a conciliatory smirk. These low-class Polish Jews, as the Fire Marshal had called them, all look pretty much alike; there is an astonishing poverty of types among them: take the first old-clothes or glass-put-in man who comes along, and he'll answer fairly well for Mr. Levinson. His age, I guessed, was in the neighborhood of forty-five. As for his person, it would have been base flattery to call it dirty. It was unspeakable. I could not help feeling that by its presence it soiled the atmosphere of the room; and I breathed with a poor relish as long as Mr. Levinson and I remained within gun-shot of each other.

"Levinson," began Mr. Sparks, in a tame and business-like tone of voice, "you are under arrest for the crime of arson in the first degree. I've found out all about that little fire of yours; I know just how, when, and why you started it. Setting fire to an occupied dwelling-house in the night time constitutes, as I say, arson in the first degree, the penalty for which is imprisonment for life. You remember

the case of Perlstein, Bernstein, and Cohen Davis, don't you, Levinson? Well, here you've gone and got yourself into the same box with them. In a few days now you'll be keeping them company up in Sing Sing. Well, twenty-nine thousand seven hundred dollars is a comfortable sum of money, but hardly worth imprisonment for life, I should think. And then, you did the job so clumsily. You gave yourself dead away, and assured your own conviction. I don't think I ever saw a worse piece of work, Levinson. You ought to have waited a month or so at least. The money would have kept, and your risk of getting caught would have been infinitely diminished. But it's too late now, Levinson, and there's no use repining. You were in a hurry, you were careless, and so—here you are. You've made your own bed, and now you've got to lie in it. I shall send you from here straight down to the Tombs. You'll come up for trial on Monday morning; and on Tuesday you'll take the train for Sing Sing, to stay there the rest of your life. The officer is waiting for you in the next room with his hand-cuffs. Before I turn you over to him, have you anything you wish to say?"

"Ach Gott, Fire Marshal!" cried Levinson, whose sallow skin (as I could see through a convenient crack in the screen behind which I was in ambush) had turned several shades sallow, and whose frame was shaking as if with cold. "For Gott's sake, Fire Marshal, don't be so hart mit me. Dot fire, I couldn't help it, it vas an accident, so help me Gott. Ach, Fire Marshal, tink of my wife and children. Don't be so hart. Ach, Fire Marshal, for de love of Gott, don't say Sing Sing."

"You ought to have thought of your wife and children, Levinson. You ought to have thought of them before you started the fire. You didn't give much thought to the other people's wives and children, who were sleeping in that house, and who might have been burned to death, did you, Levinson? It's too late now. You know the law."

"But, my Gott, Fire Marshal, it vas such a leetle fire, and all in my own place of business. You wouldn't ponish a man for a leetle fire like dot, de same as if de whole house burned down. For Gott's sake, Fire Marshal, dot would be too hart."

"It wasn't your fault, Levinson, that the whole house didn't burn down. It might have done so. As I said, lives might have been lost, in which case you'd have been hanged. No, there's no hope for you. State Prison for life will be your sentence."

"Ach, Fire Marshal, you're a good-natured man. Ach, I wouldn't belief you could be so hart. If anudder man told me you could be so hart, I wouldn't belief him. Ach, for Gott's sake, Fire Marshal, don't say Sing Sing. Ach, for Gott's sake, help me. I never done nodings of de kind before. Help me, Fire Marshal; Gott vill revard you for it."

"Well, Levinson, if you want me to help you, first of all tell me this: what have you done with the money?"

As sudden as a flash, a look of blank incomprehension shot over Levinson's face. "Money?" he repeated, in a puzzled key. "Money? What money?"

"Look here, Levinson," cried the Marshal, sternly, "I'll have none of that. If you are not frank with me, I'll turn you over to my

officer at once. If you want me to help you, you must tell me the whole truth freely. Now, what have you done with the twenty-nine thousand dollars that old Sonnenschein left with you, to keep for him?"

"Ach, Fire Marshal, you're de hardest man I ever seen. You're fearful hart. What I done mit dot money? Good Gott, what should I do mit it? I kep it, Fire Marshal. I got it yet. I got it in my store."

"Well, now, Levinson, I'll tell you what I'll do. You refund every penny of that money instantly, and I'll do as much as I can to have them let you down easily."

"Every penny! Ach, Fire Marshal, for Gott's sake, don't talk like dot. Don't say every penny. I'm a poor man, Fire Marshal; I am, so help me Gott. You don't want to ruin me, Fire Marshal. You can't be so hart as dot. Say half, Fire Marshal. Say fifteen thousand dollars, and I do it."

"Look here, Levinson; I told you I'd have no fooling. You'll refund every penny of that money, or you'll go to State Prison for life. And you've got to make your choice quickly, too. I'm tired of beating about the bush. Will you or will you not go with me now to your store, and put every dollar of that money into my hands? I want an immediate answer."

"Good Gott!" cried Levinson, fairly writhing in anguish. Then, "Well, Fire Marshal, come along."

A procession was formed, Mr. Levinson and the Marshal leading, a policeman and myself bringing up the rear. In this order we marched to Levinson's shop.

Levinson handed a paper parcel to Mr. Sparks. We examined its contents. They were: twenty-nine one-thousand-dollar bills, one five-hundred-dollar bill, and two one-hundred-dollar bills, thus answering accurately to Mr. Sonnenschein's description.

"Now, officer," said the Marshal, addressing the policeman, "take this gentleman to the Tombs. Good-by, Levinson. I'll see you later."

A few days afterward, by the Fire Marshal's intercession, Levinson was allowed to enter a plea of guilty to a minor degree of arson; and the court sentenced him to confinement at hard labor in the State Prison for a term of ten years.

## VII.

### SCHLEMIEL'S GRATITUDE.

Mr. Sparks and I climbed up-stairs to Mr. Sonnenschein's tenement.

"Vail, my kracious, Saimmy, fat brings you baick again so soon?" was the old man's greeting.

As briefly and as clearly as I could I explained what had happened since my former visit.

"*Mein Gott!* You don't mean it!" he cried, when I was done. "Go 'vay. You don't really mean it! Mr. Levinson, he set fire to dot establishment, and you got baick de money? Vail, if I aifer? Vail, dot beats de record; it does, and no mistake. Talk about brains!

Fy, Saimmy, smartness ain't no vord for it. You got vun of de graindest haits on your shoulders de Lord aifer mait. And Mr. Levinson, he aictually set fire to dot establishment, so as to get my money! Vail, dot *was* outracheous, dere ain't no use in talking. Vail, Saimmy, I cain't hardly belief it; I cain't, honor bright."

The Marshal was busy with pen and ink at a table hard by, drawing up an affidavit and a receipt for Mr. Sonnenschein to sign and swear to. After the old man had laboriously traced his name and vouched for the truth of what was written above it, the Marshal handed him the bundle containing his inheritance, and, covered with thanks from both of us, went away.

"Vail, now, Saimmy," said Mr. Sonnenschein, "now I tell you fat you do. You cairry dot poontle down-town mit you, and you go to your popper's office, and you gif it to him, and you tell him to make all de investments of dot money sich he likes. Dere's no two vays about it, Saimmy, I vas a raikular Schlemiel; and I guess maybe de best ting I can do is to let your popper mainage dot money shust exactly as if it vas his own. No maitter fat investments he makes of it, Saimmy, I tell you vun ting, I bet a hat dot vun vay or anudder dot money gets lost inside six monts. Vail, Saimmy, as I told you a great mainy times before already, dis is a fearful funny world; and I guess maybe now, aifter dis fire and aiferydings, I guess maybe you'll belief me."

My father made such investments of "dot money" as would yield Mr. Sonnenschein an annual income of fifteen hundred dollars, which the old gentleman, still hale and hearty, is enjoying to this day. Though a Jew by birth and faith, he is as good a Christian as most of the professing ones; for after he learned of Levinson's imprisonment he insisted upon making a liberal provision for Mrs. Levinson and her children. Nor is ingratitude a vice that could justly be attributed to our Schlemiel. When my parents celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of their wedding, a few months ago, they received by express a large and luminous worsted-work picture, enclosed by a massive gilt frame, which represented in the primary colors the nuptial ceremonies of Jacob and Rachel. A card attached informed them that it came with compliments and best wishes from Mr. Sonnenschein and Nettie, and on the obverse of the card, in Mr. Sonnenschein's chirography, we read, "Nettie dun it Ole herself."

But his continued prosperity has undermined the old man's philosophy and upset all his established views of life. He calls at my father's office to receive his allowance on the first day of every month. "Vail, ainydings haippened yet?" is the inquiry with which he invariably begins. And when my father replies that nothing has happened, and proceeds to count out his money, "Vail, *Gott in Himmel*, fat kind of a world is dis, ainyhow!" he cries. "I gif it oop. I cain't make haits or tails of it. Here I been a Schlemiel aifer since I vas born already, and now all of a sudden I change ofer, and I ain't no Schlemiel no more. Vail, dot beats me,—it beats me all holler, and no mistake about it. But de Lord done it, and I guess maybe he's got some reason for it. Blessed be de name of de Lord!"



## THE HOUSE OF HATE.

**M**INE enemy builded well, with the soft blue hills in sight;  
But betwixt his house and the hills I builded a house for spite;  
And the name thereof I set in the stone-work over the gate,  
With a carving of bats and apes; and I called it The House of Hate.

And the front was alive with masks of malice and of despair,  
Horned demons that leered in stone, and women with serpent hair;  
That whenever his glance would rest on the soft hills far and blue,  
It must fall on mine evil work, and my hatred should pierce him  
through.

And I said, "I will dwell herein, for beholding my heart's desire  
On my foe," and I knelt, and fain had brightened the hearth with fire;  
But the brands they would hiss and die, as with curses a strangled  
man,  
And the hearth was cold from the hour that the House of Hate began.

And I called with a voice of power, "Make ye merry, all friends of  
mine,  
In the hall of my House of Hate, where is plentiful store, and wine;  
We will drink unhealth together unto him I have foiled and fooled!"  
And they stared and they passed me by; but I scorned to be thereby  
schooled.

And I ordered my board for feast, and I drank in the topmost seat  
Choice grape from a curious cup; and the first it was wonder-sweet;  
But the second was bitter indeed, and the third was bitter and black,  
And the gloom of the grave came on me, and I cast the cup to wrack.

Alone, I was stark alone, and the shadows were each a fear,  
And thinly I laughed, but once, for the echoes were strange to hear;  
And the wind on the stairway howled, as a green-eyed wolf might cry,  
And I heard my heart: I must look on the face of a man, or die!

So I crept to my mirrored face, and I looked, and I saw it grown  
(By the light in my shaking hand) to the like of the masks of stone;  
And with horror I shrieked aloud as I flung my torch and fled;  
And a fire-snake writhed where it fell, and at midnight the sky was  
red.

And at morn, when the House of Hate was a ruin, despoiled of flame,  
I fell at mine enemy's feet, and besought him to slay my shame.  
But he looked in mine eyes and smiled, and his eyes were calm and  
great:

"You rave, or have dreamed," he said: "I saw not your House of  
Hate!"

## AMONG MY WEEDS.

POETS as well as many other professed lovers of the beautiful have written books about their walks among the flowers and their pleasant play-work among their roses. And all this is well. But I have thought that maybe I could widen the reach of vision for some of my fellow-lovers of the beautiful things of this wondrously beautiful world by telling something about weeds.

From youth upward to this hour my path has led much of the time through these humbler testaments of beauty, and always close to the border of them: so you see I know the weeds well. And I say at the outset that it is not wise that the domain of man in his love and cherishing of the beautiful shall end where the roses and flowers leave off and the weeds begin.

For example, the precious waxen-like hyacinth, which you may find growing in thousands of windows in any city, is the one ever-present weed in Oregon. It purples and pinks and whitens tens of thousands of square miles of that vast State, from the mouth of the Columbia to the head-waters of the Willamette. The root or bulb of this weed was the one principal food of the Indians, and even of the early settlers of Oregon. It is called *camas* at home, and is good food.

A few summers ago I was a guest at one of the finest of the many fine summer homes of New Bedford. The gentle and cultured hostess took the earliest occasion to show me her wonderful little forest of rhododendrons. And beautiful it was, too,—one of the most beautiful things to see in all the beautiful environs of wealthy and aristocratic New Bedford. The gardener told me one day, in a gush of mixed-up confidence and enthusiasm, that this little half-acre of rhododendrons cost about five hundred dollars, to say nothing at all of the annual expense of keeping it alive and in order away up there on the edge of the island.

But let me inform you that the hunter as well as the small farmer in the Sierra of California finds the rhododendron so dense and general on the mountain-slopes, where it has flourished as a sort of forest-tree for all time perhaps, that it is a great nuisance.

In fact, no amount of culture or patient employment at New Bedford can make this glorious bush half so rank and beautiful as it is willing to make itself in the Sierras. The same may be said of the *camas*, or hyacinth. And I am sure that to those who are careful of the economies both in art and nature, I need demonstrate no longer on this point than to suggest that ever so much would be saved if the farmer in the West, as well as wealthy people in the East, would let the *camas* and the rhododendron flourish in their native places entirely. In this age of the annihilation of space New Bedford would find it far more economical to go to the Pacific and look upon these fields and forests of native weeds and bushes. And this economy would enable

her to admit many of the despised and down-trodden weeds that have knocked at her garden-gates for admission all these years, while she has been trying, against the consent of soil and climate, to make such unwilling prisoners as these I have mentioned flourish and feel at home.

I have only set down these two examples in order to indicate in a general way what I should like to teach in this lesson on weeds. I do not quite know what weeds or wild flowers New Bedford or any other like rich city of the North could take to her heart from out her lanes and fence-corners and by-ways, but I remember seeing cranberries growing in the road by the sea-shore, trodden under foot and quite despised in the lowly struggle and patient effort to make this beautiful world more beautiful. And I suggest that New Bedford take this useful as well as ornamental berry to her bosom, among others, and see what can be made of it. Surely, surely the cranberry of New Bedford would not be quite as sour if my sweet hostess there should smile upon it.

When I sat down here on the summit of Meridian Hill at Washington I found myself on the most barren bit of earth in all this region. And that is saying that this portion of the worn-out land is barren indeed. And there has been great reason for this. General Washington, the story runs, indicated this spot as the place in which to set up the meridian stone, saying that our independence of England would not be completed until the nation established its own meridian. And here the meridian stone was set up during the administration of Jefferson. Of course this did not enrich the stony soil at all, but the attrition of many feet through all the years brought the stones to the surface and kept the place bare and barren. Then during the war the soldiers dug up the stony earth and made breastworks, and this left not a shrub or spear of grass. As evidence that war and barrenness instead of peace and flowers flourished here of old, I have several Indian arrow-heads on my mantel-piece, and a rusty and ugly old cannon-ball in a fence-corner,—all dug up from the stony surface of my limited plot of ground on Meridian Hill.

Did you ever hear of a "crop" of stones? I employed an old black man when I first came here to gather up the stones—"nigger-heads," as they are called by some—and pile them up in the fence-corners. I paid him well, for I was glad to get them out of my way, and thought this was the end of it. But the old man turned the silver in his hands, twisted his hat, and said that he should like the job of gathering the next "crap."

Sure enough, each year about the same number of stones insist on coming to the surface. The old black man has gathered his fourth "crap" of stones for me on Meridian Hill. He firmly believes, and so do all the numerous negroes here, that they grow up out of the ground the same as anything else. We know, however, that it is the washing away and the settling down of the earth that lays the stones bare, and, besides that, the pick and spade bring some to the surface that otherwise might not be seen.

The first signs of life here in the spring, after I had got my cabin and fences up and the visible stones in the corners, was a sudden raid

of sorrel. It stood up as bravely as soldiers on parade, facing the sun, where the small gravel-stones lay thickest. It was pretty, certainly far prettier than the barren ground, and I was glad. But my neighbors came leaning over the fence on either side and laughed at my admiration most heartily. I am sandwiched in between two army officers who have broad garden-plots and plenty of money, and so they destroy whatever weeds they please to destroy and cultivate whatever accepted and popular flowers they please to cultivate.

But out of sheer necessity my sorrel had to keep its gravel bed. I had neither the time nor money to uproot it and replace it with a comelier plant. And, besides that, there was a touch of tenderness in its humility. It had taken the lowliest seat, it had valiantly taken the most barren and forbidding place on all the barren heights, meekly, modestly, unobtrusively. And no one could say that it was not daily, hourly making the place more beautiful.

"You must not let it ripen," said one of my martial neighbors one day. "It will blow its seeds all over the place, and we have been fighting sorrel here for ten years."

This enmity of the whole world, as it seemed, against my humble and barely visible little sorrel-bed made me its friend forever. I fell to planning how to save it and not injure my neighbors. And, this in view, I sent the old black philosopher over into Virginia to dig up and bring me from the fence-corners a load of wild raspberries. These we set all along my fences in, under, and against the stone-heaps. This shut off my sorrel entirely from annoying my neighbors. And let me set it down here before I forget it, that I now have annually at least five dollars' worth of the finest berries in the world from these graceful companions of the weeds. The long, purple, rainbow-reaches of laden stems entirely hide all the stone-heaps, and birds of many kinds make their nests and rear their young here. Of all the fortunate accidents of my negative sort of gardening here, nothing has brought me more profit and pure delight than these despised wild briers, which time out of mind have had to hide away under old logs, by abandoned huts, forgotten walks, or are at least merely tolerated in the fence-corners of half-tended fields.

To get back to my sorrel. One early morning an old negress with a knife and Shaker bucket leaned over my front fence and offered "all free gratis for nothin'" to cut up and take away my sorrel. She wanted it for "greens." And delicious greens it makes, too, only it should be used as it is used in the south of France, where it is carefully cultivated, as a salad, instead of being boiled with pork or bacon, as it is here by the colored people.

But I stood by my sorrel, for it was now a continual delight. I could almost see it grow. Every spring shower shot it forward and widened it out till it completely hid all the gravel-stones and began to blossom. And it has a most beautiful flower,—a tall pyramidal mass of flowers, in fact; and a variegated mass, too,—yellow and pink and rose,—and as it ripens and turns to seed the colors change and glorify the God of nature with a continual harmony.

And what became of my meek and kindly sorrel, the first flower of



the year, the first of all fair things to meet me and make me welcome in my new home here? I do not know. As the ground became more rich year after year and rested from the continual tramp of folks who came here to look down upon the city or to see where Washington had drawn the meridian for the Western World, the meek and modest sorrel went away as quietly as it came. I never permitted a single plant of the little pioneer to be destroyed further than was necessary to set out bushes or dig up stones, but you may search in vain for the sorrel on my grounds now. The beautiful weed did its work on the barren gravel hill-top, and then gave place to something of a more bold and pretentious order just so soon as the ground was rich enough to support it.

I ought to explain that I have never kept a gardener. I never yet have had my grounds either ploughed or dug up in any way further than as before indicated, and this has given opportunity for many strange plants and flowers to take refuge here. All are welcome; all shall be protected. The ground is poor, but if they can live they shall be my companions. In this republic and land of equality I do not see why we are to set up an aristocracy of flowers, and at the dictation of the gardener and botanist cherish only the prisoners brought at a great cost from other lands. And, what is more, I will never assault them with the hard and terrible names which I find set down in the books for them. They have never done me harm, but every morning up through the dew or rain they lift their faces to mine and make me very glad as they seek to rise from their grassy beds. No, they shall not be named the dreadful names which I find set down in the books for them. But May-apple, foxglove, dragon's-tooth, Johnny-jump-up, daisy, buttercup, all the old and baby names tender with the associations of childhood and the old paternal home, these shall be theirs forever.

Having obtained a sort of local reputation for harboring all the valueless and despised plants and weeds of the country, one of my good neighbors laughingly suggested that perhaps I should like to have a few mullein-stalks, and accordingly sent them over.

I planted them in the front yard, near the fence. In fact, I gave this poor battered and hated plant the post of honor. Not a carriage-load of sight-seers, not a visitor, but did not contemplate those mullein-stalks as they began to shoot up in a long graceful line between my door and the Washington Monument.

At first people laughed at the idea and derided the humble weed which I had placed in the post of honor and was nourishing with all the care and affection possible to bestow. And was I betrayed by this sensitive weed? Candidly, I have seen nothing more graceful, more comely, more completely beautiful, than these mullein-stalks. They grew to a tremendous height, one of them twelve feet and four inches. See what kindness for only one year in a thousand will do. And not a man or woman was to be found who did not cheerfully say that nothing more beautiful than this lofty rod of gold, with its great velvet leaves, could be found in this city of plants and flowers.

An old negress, a sort of doctor, came by as the season moved on,

and insisted on buying the whole lot for medicinal purposes. I sold them to her in exchange for her secret knowledge of their medicinal properties, which I believe is valuable.

The story of one more weed (and it is the story of many), and I conclude. The first year I came here a poke-berry bush thrust up its red, rank stems through the gravel not far from the sorrel, and I was glad to see it, for the place was so very bare. I dug about it some, shovelled a lot of chips and bark and lime and débris from about the new-built cabin, and took what care of it I could without going to any cost or extra trouble.

This despised weed is also eaten by the black people of the humbler order, and many an old woman haunted my gate with knife and basket in her round about the hill for "greens." But I would not part with my poke-stalk for all their vast and beneficent smiles, and so it soon stood as tall as my head.

Did you ever know that this blood-red and most rank growth has taken possession of the battle-fields of the South? It has. At Bull Run it hangs its graceful red stems, laden with bushels of blood-red berries, out from every fence-corner and pile of stones. At Fredericksburg you find it all up and down the battle-field, and on every fortress

Where valor fought in other days.

The first year my pet poke-stalk in the door-yard of my cabin here did not attain to much, but the second and third year—for it grows up from the same root for many years—it was a glory to look upon from the first burst of spring till the heavy frosts, until at last, even now as I write, in middle November, it looms up between my window and the National Capitol, the most luxuriant and fervid and magnificent weed you ever saw grow. It is more than ten feet in height, and its three tall, scarlet stems are laden with berries that would make at least a barrel of blood-red ink. The trim and slim stems are red, the leaves are red, the berries are red! Surely it at least suggests the "burning bush" wherein Moses looking into the face of nature saw the face of the living God.

Only yesterday I saw, as I sat at my work here, the President of the United States stop his carriage to look at this once lowly and despised weed, which has grown to such goodly proportions and to such splendor of beauty under decent treatment.

Let us widen the dominion of our love for flowers, or, rather, let us say there are no weeds. And, having accepted and acted on this great truth, we will have less trouble in applying this principle to the entire human race, and can say that there is no one, without some piteous misfortune of birth or breeding, who is perfectly wicked or wholly lovely.

## A LITTLE BOY'S TALK.

## I.

## HIS WILL AND WISH.

*(To his Mother.)*

"BUT I could do just anything, that's what!  
That isn't right (that's all I've ever done!),  
If Somebody would let me, who will not,—  
And you're the one!

"Well, then, if fairy godmothers come true,  
I'd wish" (and here the small voice grew forlorn),  
"I tell you what, mamma, I'd wish—that you  
Were never born!"

## II.

## OF A VISITOR.

His mother's maiden friend once shook him, saying  
He laughed and slept in church that afternoon.  
That he had heard the sermon or the praying  
He proved right soon.

Long in her withering face he looked, to fret her,  
Then called, through all his dimples and disdain,  
"Mamma, I think Miss Somebody had better  
Be born again!"

## III.

## HIS VIEWS ON THE CUCKOO.

*(In Ireland.)*

The little exile, whose sweet head  
Wore yet the Atlantic sun,  
Threw down his hoop: "That's it," he said,  
"And it is only one!

"It can't behave like other birds  
At home across the sea.  
It tries to make" (I write his words)  
"You think it's more than three!

"That cuckoo's not a cuckoo, though,"  
I heard him murmuring;  
"It isn't—anywhere, you know;  
It isn't—anything!

"But, somehow, it is—everywhere  
At once! And I suppose  
It *can't* build nests, for it's—the air!  
I know a boy that knows!"

## THE PORTRAIT AND THE GHOST.

IN the early summer of 1859 I took possession of an old-fashioned house on what was once a lane in a rural neighborhood, but is now St. John's Avenue. The Finchley Road, into which it runs, was then bounded by large properties, since cut up and closely built upon. The situation was near enough to more populous neighborhoods to answer my purpose, and the lease was favorable, while the house, which was quaint and interesting, was also curiously well suited to my work, which is that of an artist. It may have been built about the time of George II., as it had the black-and-red brick-work of his reign. Standing with its broad front and its semicircle of stone steps a little askew to the road, it had a queer look of shy old-fashioned disrespect for the less stately dwellings which faced it and occupied on either side a part of what once were its own more ample pleasure-grounds. In front stood a high brick wall, and two broad gate-ways, guarded by square stone columns half hidden by ivy and crowned with tall, gray, much-worn, stone pineapples. Behind the house was a long garden, once a part of an orchard, where a few aged and fruitless apple-trees had won new values to the artist's eye by taking on the likeness of gnarled antique olive-trees. Within, the rooms were needlessly large, and at the back of the mansion was an old ball-room panelled in some dark-yellow wood. The roof was vaulted, and the ample wall-space enabled me to break out a large south window and to build opposite to it a huge open fireplace. Altogether I was well suited when in July I moved in and began work on two pictures which were to be my first Academy exhibits as an Associate R. A.

The luxury of space was new to me, and the clear air, comparatively free from smoke and dust, made my labor delightful. Few persons called on me, and the solitude which all workers crave at times was helpful, and made more enjoyable my occasional outings with a friend at the sea-side. I had, too, my daily ride up the Finchley Road on to Hampstead Heath, my day of undisturbed painting, my walk down town, my dinner at the Saville Club, and my stroll homeward across the Park with a companionable pipe. It was altogether a delightful life.

I speak of it, and of my cheerful surroundings, merely because, as I reflect on this time, and on the incident with which it is connected, the sombreness of my small adventure seems to come out in dark contrast with my other recollections of those days of golden contentment.

On the morning of September 9, at about ten o'clock, after a lazy dawdle over the breakfast-table, I lit a pipe, and wandered out into the orchard, to think over my work for the day.

As I strolled to and fro beneath the meagre leafage of the orchard, my servant came to tell me that two ladies were in the drawing-room. I went into the house, with the discontent of interrupted idleness, and was a little taken aback as I came in upon my visitors. They were



both tall women, and were evidently mother and daughter. Both rose as I entered, the elder woman saying, "I believe I have the pleasure to see Mr. Alden."

"I am Mr. Alden. Pray sit down. What can I do for you?"

"I am Mrs. Dulaney. My daughter, Miss Dulaney. I came to ask you to paint a portrait of my daughter. You will, I trust, pardon my rather early call: our time is hardly our own, as we leave London in three days, to return for the purpose of sitting to you, if that can be arranged. My daughter is not quite well, but I hope to bring her back from Ilfracombe looking her best."

"And when will that be?" I inquired.

"In ten days, if agreeable to you."

"That will answer. I shall be more free then. You will, of course, want to know what my terms are."

"Pardon me, I think we may let the business matter pass. I have heard from Mrs. — what you expect for a full-length, and if you will but do your best for us, there is no reasonable sum I shall not be glad to give. Whatever contents you will, I assure you, be acceptable to me."

I scarcely liked to pursue the subject, which was simply in the business part of my profession.

"As you please," I said; "but I prefer to give you a memorandum of my terms."

"That is as you like. I will call in two days and tell you more precisely when we can give you a first sitting."

Then the younger woman spoke: before this she had merely given me good-morning in return for my greeting.

"If," she said, "you would arrange now about the dress, and how I am to sit, would it not save time? I sat to Hunt last year, and it took two or three hours to settle preliminaries."

"But perhaps Mr. Alden is busy now."

"No, I am not." In fact, the two women interested me, and there were soft inflections and a tender dealing with the vowels in their speech which puzzled me. At my suggestion, we went into the studio together. I asked the daughter, after some little talk, to stand on the dais. As she faced me, I saw that she was a very handsome woman, and that she was rather too pale. As I moved about, observing her from various points of view, I remarked that she trembled slightly and changed her position, as if the brief continuous effort tired her.

I said at last, "Pray sit down: you seem to be easily wearied by standing. I hardly think you will bear to be a stander,—if there be such a word."

"Oh, but there is, of course," she replied, smiling, "and I shall stand better in a week or two. I am a little out of sorts just now. In fact, mamma, I would like to get into the air. That is, if you are done."

I said that I had no more to add.

After this they went away, with the understanding that Mrs. Dulaney would return and definitely arrange for the sittings.

The week passed, however, without the promised visit, at which I

was both surprised and disappointed. Full-length commissions were rare with me in those days, and full-lengths of very handsome women rare at all times. I felt, too, a sense of annoyance that women who seemed to me so well-bred should have behaved so unaccountably.

I had made no note of the day on which Mrs. Dulaney called, and, as I have a bad memory for dates, I am not quite sure how long it was after her visit when the object of it was suddenly brought before me anew. It was not over ten days: of that I am pretty certain. I had ridden early to the cottage of a friend out Hampstead way, and, returning later in the morning, left my horse, as usual, at a stable near by and walked to my house. It was after twelve o'clock as I strolled through the great gate-way, which was closed only at night.

As I went in I saw a woman standing at the foot of the steps, with one hand on the iron rail. As she turned, I was instantly aware that it was Miss Dulaney. She was alone,—which seemed odd to me,—and there was something about her which, as I advanced, struck me as singular. What it was I did not then perceive, nor can I now be any more sure of its nature than I was when we met. Her height was remarkable,—that of a full-sized man, I should say. As I recall my memory of her, I am sure that a certain decisiveness in her ways was what seemed most odd to me. She was dressed in some corn-colored stuff, and her bonnet was like it in tint, and small after the fashion, and this was well, because her head was of a massive beauty and the features of a certain noble largeness. As I came forward, keeping my emptied pipe behind me, she turned at my step. Then I saw how remarkable was the build of her forehead, and how vast were the masses of brown hair which crowned the proud square brows. Her face had never quite ceased to haunt my memory since our first interview, yet as I now saw her I felt that I had not hitherto appreciated the dignity of her appearance. As we met I said, "I am really very glad to see you again, Miss Dulaney. I began to fear I should lose the pleasure of painting you."

"You shall have the pleasure of painting me," she returned. "That is why I am here."

By this time the door was open, and, without a word, she moved by me, and, in what I might call a deliberate manner, went, much to my surprise, directly into the studio. It was reached through a small room and a passage which had in it two doors, one of which I had had covered with green baize since her first call. For a day or two after I came to the house, this way to the studio used to mislead me. She went through it and into the painting-room without a word, although as I followed her I twice made some trivial remark, feeling that altogether her conduct was eccentric and unusual.

"When may I look to see Mrs. Dulaney?" I asked at last, as she stood facing me by the dais.

"My mother will not be here. How long shall you be in painting me?"

"How long?" I said. "I do not quite understand."

"That is it. How long in painting me? I am ready."

"How long? Well, about three weeks."

"No, you will finish to-day. What hour might it be?"

"Half-past twelve," I said. "But really——"

"So late!" she returned, "so late! We have till dusk,—no more."

I was getting bewildered. Was the woman insane? What did it all mean?

"To talk plain sense," I said, "pictures are not painted in a day. I must simply decline to make the attempt."

All this while she stood by the dais, having quietly removed her bonnet and taken off her gloves. Presently she stepped on to the platform, and looked at me as if waiting to see what I would do. A yellow shawl was thrown half off her shoulders, and one hand, holding her gloves, rested on the back of an old Venetian chair. The accidentally assumed pose was charming.

"I am ready," she said, and I noticed that in speaking she did not drop her eyes on me, but remained serenely gazing up into the white south light above us.

I was more and more puzzled. But, repressing my annoyance, and with a feeling that there was in this whole matter something unexplained, I said, very quietly, but yet firmly, "What you ask of me is an impossible task, and you must pardon me if I say that not even to oblige you can I attempt it."

"We are losing time," she returned, still looking with motionless, patient eyes over my head.

"I think you do not quite understand me," I replied. "I said that I could not paint you."

"I do understand; but time is going past us like—oh! like a swift river. It will never come back,—never. Do you not see that this is a thing which you must do,—that it is a thing sent for you to do? The very minutes are precious, and you are wasting them,—and wasting me."

As I stood a moment troubled and doubtful, she suddenly stepped from the dais and moved to my side. I have seen before changes in women, but I was not prepared for what now I saw.

She laid a hand on my arm,—just a touch to emphasize the change,—her figure seemed to bend over me, a great gentleness came on her face, and the eyes which turned on mine were, of a sudden, tender with tears. "Help me," she said.

I was now in a state part amusement, part simple amazement. It had become easier to obey her whim than to resist further.

"Very well," I said. "I must find a canvas."

"Thank you," she said, and without other words at once resumed her former place on the dais.

"I will do it," I continued; "but I shall fail. I cannot paint later than half-past five, if so late as that. Let me arrange your chair. You must sit, so as to give me a three-quarter face, which will make it easier. It can be but a sketch, after all."

"I shall stand," she said. "Go on."

There was something in her eyes which made me give up.

There were several canvases ready stretched in the corner. I chose one, forty by fifty inches,—the size for a three-quarter seated figure. Turning to carry it to the easel, I saw that she still stood looking

straight before her, and apparently with no curiosity as to the studio or my movements. By this time I had concluded that she certainly must be insane; but this did not lessen, in fact it rather increased, the effect she produced upon me,—a mingling of admiration with a vague sense of discomfort and uneasiness. Whatever annoyance I had was, however, lost for the time, as, having placed my canvas, I picked up my charcoal and, falling back a pace, looked at my visitor. When I came to survey her thus critically, I was startled by the physical completeness of the creature before me. Certainly she was of unusual height, but her whole build was in proportion, and there was a stately calm about her motionless figure which I have never seen in any other woman. Her face was too pallid for one so strongly built; in fact, the lips showed the only bright color in her face, and they were of an unusually definite red.

As I moved a step nearer, I saw that her eyes were of a size to match the noble largeness of her other features. "Be so good as to look straight at me," I said.

"I cannot," she returned. "Go on." And her motionless gaze remained set in a steady stare up into the white cloud-masses which made the light quite perfect for a painter. Then that happened to me which happens now and then at rare moments to one who has so mastered the technique of his work that, unembarrassed by his means, he can give himself up to the unrestrained passion of his art. I realized with almost emotional intensity the proud still beauty of the woman, and with this came to me swiftly an overflowing conviction of my own creative competency. I began to draw, feeling my face flush, while with strange ease I found my charcoal following the curves of neck and bust and steady shoulders. Then I took my palette and began to paint. I did not wish to speak, and I did not desire that she should. At times I felt as if I were transferring something of the woman herself to my canvas; and I have had this feeling before, but not intensely as now I felt it. The lines of her head grew on the canvas, and it began to fascinate me as she herself had done. Continuing to paint in this mood of utter absorption, I lost all sense of the passage of time. A clock above the fireplace began to chime, and then struck four. The noise broke in on my work with a sense for me of physical shock, yet three must have struck unheard. I had been at work since a little after twelve and a half o'clock. My hand fell for a moment from exhaustion, as I suddenly became aware of the lapse of time, and I was abruptly conscious of the strange fury with which I had been using the golden minutes. I next reflected with amazement that this woman had been standing motionless for more than three hours,—a thing almost unheard of,—impossible even for the oldest models. I felt ashamed at my selfish indifference, and my own immense sense of fatigue emphasized my self-reproof.

I said to her at once, "I have been wrong to let you stand so long. Let me beg of you to rest. One gets so self-absorbed."

"It is I," she replied, "who have overtaxed you. I should not have made you work so hard; but my hours were—I may say are—limited. I shall not weary, and when you are rested we can go on."



"Thank you," I returned, and went by her, towards the fire, which was still burning. She did not move, nor did her eyes seek mine as she spoke.

"If you will excuse me, I will walk down the garden a few moments and smoke my pipe. Then I can go on. But I do wish you would sit down. If I am exhausted, what must you be?"

"Thank you, I prefer to stand."

Without more words, I hastily lit my pipe and passed out through the glass door, which I closed behind me, still conscious of dreadful fatigue, which seemed to increase. I sat down on a bench, and smoked with great sense of the calming influence of my pipe. I may have been thus seated during five minutes, when I was aware of something about me like a perfume. It struck me at once, as I was smoking, that it was strange I should be able to recognize any other odor. What I smelt was a faint aroma, which puzzled me with a belief that it was not unfamiliar. I have no musical ear, but my senses of taste and smell and color are faultless. I stopped smoking, and turned to look about me for the source of this odor, when I saw standing a few feet from me the young woman I had left in my studio. I instantly rose, but before I could speak she said, distinctly, but very gently,—

"Are you rested? We have but little time."

"Certainly," I replied, in amazement, for I had not heard her open the glass door nor shut it, and yet it was shut, and I was not twenty feet from it: "I will come at once." And, standing, I glanced down at my pipe as I shook the ashes out of it. Looking up again, I saw that I was alone. There was the orchard, the house, I myself, and no one else. I was puzzled, and then simply decided that I had made on my mind's eye a too decisive picture of the woman whose strange beauty and singular urgency had driven me through these hours of passionate eager labor. I turned musingly to go into the house, and was again conscious of the odor I have mentioned. It came and went, a subtle penetrative scent, unreasonably exciting my curiosity. Entering the room, I had a curious shock to see this pallid woman standing as motionless as when I had left her. I concluded, of course, that she had used my absence to rest and had just reassumed her pose.

"How well you stand!" I said. "It is wonderful."

"I am not tired. Please to make haste."

"Then we shall go on. You are sure you are not tired?"

"No. Go on."

The short London day was coming to its close, and we were entering that hour, delicious to the artist, when the shadows broaden with ever-softening margins,—the hour when Rembrandt first learned to paint, and the fine charm of which he never lost. Conscious of the flitting day's advance, I painted with that swift unerring hand which once in a life tricks one with the belief that he is above his fellows in capacity. As I retreated anew and looked from the almost moveless figure to the face and form on my canvas, I knew what a splendid thing I had done in these hours of triumphant toil. Could she stand it longer? could I but have another half-hour? In my delight at what I

had achieved, I lost my humanity in the utter selfishness of fortunate achievement. She must stay till the last moment. I said no word, but eagerly painted. I had not once paused to measure or plumb my figure. In these hours of eager work I had not had a moment of hesitant effort. The light was now fading, but I feared to speak, lest I should thus suggest her departure. From the corners little shadows crawled out on to the floor and deepened. About her, too, mysterious flakes of darkness fell and grew broader with softened edges among the folds of her dress and on the falling ruffles about her neck, while the white south light shone large in her eyes, and these stayed, as before, unnaturally motionless.

Clearly, I could not go on longer. Already too much was beautifully indistinct in the growing shadows; but I was eager to finish the hand, which, with the long gloves in among its fingers, rested lightly on the chair-back. I moved quite close to her to observe it. As I looked, I noticed that it became more difficult to see. Now I perceived it well, and then I could see only the chair which it touched. "I fear," I said, speaking for the first time in an hour, "that I have overtaxed you, as I have myself. I find my vision is not clear." And of this I was presently more sure, because now her face had vanished, and against the shadowy background only two vast eyes glowed moveless and unwinking.

I recoiled a step or two, troubled at my own state of mind.

"You are right," she said; "but I will try to do better." As she spoke, I again saw her whole face, and even her figure, with an excessive distinctness, while also I became once more conscious of the odor I have referred to. I might say of this scent that it was cool and damp, and yet that it was a little like that of the clove-pink. Something in this strange adventure began to disturb me. I paused a moment, still looking at the stately figure which was now lost in the darkening shade about her, now vividly distinct to the least fold of the dress. The fury of desire to paint fell from me, and more and more I realized my own sense of immeasurable fatigue.

"You are a strange person to paint," I said.

"Not so strange as I soon shall be. You must be very tired."

"And you."

"I am not tired. Is it done? Do not lose a moment, I entreat you. How thankful he will be!"

I was exhausted, more by the intensity of the effort than by its duration, but I answered,—

"I can see a little longer; but it is difficult."

"Wait," she replied: "I can do still better. How is that?"

In fact, she was again more distinct, and her white face, and the yellow tints of her dress, which had but now been as one with the absorbing shadows, stood out clear as gold in sunshine against the deepening gloom. Before this, I had been puzzled, annoyed, or made thoughtful by the events of this singular sitting, but now I felt, for the first time, a sense of something like terror. The room was clad thick with shadows, which had grown as the light faded. Behind me was the vast square of white clouds, fast graying as the evening fell.

Before me was this still figure in statue-like steadiness. As I looked, it seemed to me to grow dim, and then, if I glanced at my canvas, and again turned towards my model, it was for a time distinct, but only to grow indistinct as I gazed at it anew. Plainly enough, my own visual power was exhausted by the immense strain I had put upon it. To test this (for the fact began to perplex me), I worked deliberately a few moments on her dress without looking at her face. Then I fell back a step or two, as we artists are apt to do, to see my work at the distance at which it would be seen by others. As I looked at her once more, I was again faintly conscious of the odor so often mentioned, but my sitter was gone, her place vacant. I stared about me into the gathering gloom, and moved towards the dais, supposing in my bewilderment that she had stepped down and must be hidden by my canvas. There was no one in sight. Her gloves were still lying over the chair-back, just where a moment since her hand had rested, and her bonnet was gone. I had now a distinct sense of fear, or at least of awe. I put out my hand to take the gloves. As I did this, I came into contact with her hand,—with something, at all events, cold and to the touch flesh, which detained the glove in place. I drew back, feeling little chills crawling over me, becoming sure at last that I was in the presence of one of those strange facts which seem to be so rarely allowed to our experience. I looked up. Surely I saw for a moment the woman's face. Then it was gone. In the courage of agitation, I caught at the gloves. They were no longer held. For a few seconds I stood in the half-darkness with them in my hand, a plain material record of their owner. I laid them down on the easel's ledge. Suddenly I saw them move as if they had been quietly picked up by a hand I could not see. Then I lost sight of them: they were gone. Need I say that I was profoundly disturbed? I confess to having felt at this time the extremity of awe, but by which as yet all curiosity was not expelled. I walked again to the dais, and, putting out my hand, moved it across where the figure had been, and then, with a cry of wonder and fear, recoiled. My hand met with some resistance, or rather hardly with that: it was like passing the fingers through a quantity of floss-silk hanging loose. The next moment I felt something which resembled cobwebs cross my face. The sense of mystery was harder to bear than any testing of the cause, and, with this urgency acting upon me, I moved quickly forward and passed a hand to and fro where she had stood. There was no resistance to my touch. I was alone. At this moment the clock struck half-past five. It was cloudy, and darker than common at that hour. I walked over to the wall, struck a match, and lit the four large gas-burners on either side of the chimney-place. They fairly illuminated the whole room. At least I could now see into every corner. At first the light, by showing that I was alone, seemed to deepen my sense of awe. I sat down by the fading fire, which at this season was nearly always needed, and then, conscious of having my back to the room and its great spaces, arose, and stood facing the large southern window. I wanted to cross the studio and see what I had painted. I could not. I think I was afraid to do so. My hesitation arose partly from an inexplicable alarm and partly from a

dread of finding no picture and thus of becoming conscious that my brain was in some way disordered. At last I felt a wild desire to get out of the place. It was easy enough, but the journey across the floor had become impossible. This time I knew that I was afraid. Suddenly my eye fell on the bell-pull near me, to the left of the fireplace. I pulled it. A moment passed, and the door opened. It was Susan, the maid,—a middle-aged woman. I simply looked at her with a sense of relief.

"Did you please to ring, sir?"

"Yes, I rang. I—I want breakfast at eight, to-morrow."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Susan, did you see a lady go out a little while ago?"

"No, sir; no lady did. I was in the hall, sir, a-cleaning."

"And, please, Susan, just pull down the curtain of the big window; it moves rather hard."

By this time I was like a scared child unwilling to confess his fears. I wanted Susan to pass between my easel and the window. She was quite at home in studios, and might chance to speak of the picture. She pulled down the curtain.

"And, Susan," I said, "just turn that easel, so as to get a little light on it." I was afraid to say, "move the picture now on it." There might be no picture on it!

Susan, accustomed to such orders, turned the easel part-way round. It was now sideways to me. She made no remark, except to say,—

"Is that all, sir?"

I could say no more. I was faint and confused. "Yes. Don't forget I am to breakfast earlier than usual."

"No, sir. And might I raise the windows when you are gone out? There is a queer smell, like it might be of damp things, or dead flowers."

"A smell, Susan?" I said. "And like what? What sort of a smell?"

"Like—I don't know what it's like. It is very strong about the easel, sir. I thought you might have left some dead flowers about; but it isn't quite that, neither."

"Very well. It is of no moment. You need not go, if you have anything to do here. I am going out at once."

In fact, I did not want again to be left alone in the studio. I was not afraid of what I might see or hear, but I dreaded the uncertainty I felt as to what might be the effect of further experiences upon my mind. I wished to be out among other men in the air, where I could reflect at leisure on what I had seen. I was, in fact, so much disturbed that I could not go over and look to see if I had been in the grasp of an hallucination and had dreamed myself into a belief that I had painted a picture. I was physically shaken,—that was clear; for, as I turned to go, I felt a little dizzy, and the room and everything in it seemed to tilt to the right for a moment. This annoyance added to my dread of learning that I had been self-deceived, for it seemed to show me that I was actually in some physical way unwell.

I went up-stairs and took a good cold bath, dressed for dinner, and



walked away down the Finchley Road, feeling better and more tranquil. I resolved that I would not allow myself to think of the picture until next day, when in daylight I could face the whole question and end my doubts.

I was rather late for the general table of the Saville, and therefore turned into Piccadilly and went on to the Athenæum, where I dined alone. I read awhile in the library, and then descended into the somewhat dismal apartment below-stairs which is devoted to those who smoke. At the foot of the staircase is a fire, kept up even in summer, as the place is apt to be damp and chilly. I stopped here a moment to warm myself, after our British fashion, with my back to the fire. In the recess beyond me was a weighing-scale, for use by such gentlemen as are anxious concerning the cumulative results of too many good dinners. Suddenly I began to wonder if such a being as I had seen, or believed I had seen, had weight. If I were correct in my observations and my visitor were not a creation of my own brain, projected into visual existence, what I had seen certainly appeared to have varied in density, because, while at one moment it was distinct enough, a little later I had felt a part of it as offering a slight resistance to the passage of my hand. On entering the smoking-room on my left, I was emotionally disturbed for a moment, owing to my becoming faintly conscious of the presence of the aromatic odor which I had perceived first in the orchard. I at once reasoned that the recalling to mind of the form I had seen had brought up anew the memory of the perfume already linked in association with its former presence, but I began to feel some alarm lest these vivid impressions should have become too completely a part of my organization. In a word, I did not like it.

It was rather late, and London so empty that few persons were in the smoking-room. It chanced that I knew none of them; and I sat alone in a corner, smoking, and reflecting on the circumstances which had so strangely occupied the afternoon. It was after eleven, and I was about to go, when I observed a gentleman near me and at the same time saw that we were alone in the room. I noticed him chiefly because he had two or three times glanced at me, as if I too were to him a matter of interest or curiosity.

At the more formal clubs it is so rare for men to address any one whom they do not know that I was a little surprised when he said, at last,—

“Pleasant weather for London.”

“Yes,” I returned,—“charming,” and, seeing clearly that he was not English, I added, “and, for a stranger, London just now, with its faint mistiness and its freedom from smoke, is seen to its best advantage.”

“Smoke without fog, if it be well diluted, is also pretty,” he said. “It gives curious umber tints to the sunlight, and to the shadows too. We see it now and then in America after our forest-fires. If there is a good deal of it in the upper atmosphere, things get a queer ghostly look,—an odd sense of the unreal, due, I suppose, to its making everything look unfamiliar.”

I was sensitive enough to consider it strange that he should be thinking of things ghostly, just as I was.

"We use the word 'ghostly' rather lightly, don't you think?"

"Well, perhaps so."

"For my part, the mere word itself has a singular look. If you will write the word GHOST alone on a sheet of paper, and then look at it, you will see or feel what I mean. All those words have a queer look. I mean, all those which begin with *gh*. There are but two or three,—Ghost, and Ghastly, and Ghoul, but that is Persian."

"What an odd idea!" he said. "I would like to see a ghost. Suppose, now, one could see one here at this moment. Or, pardon me, perhaps you are one, or I am one. How should either of us know? We may have met many."

"Have you ever known a man who had seen one?" I asked.

"No. Have you?"

"Yes."

"Indeed! Pray tell me about it."

To this day I cannot say why I answered as I did. I am naturally reticent, and I was ashamed of my weakness about the picture and all that belonged to it; yet I said,—

"I have seen one."

"You!" he said. "Really! Pardon me, I don't mean to doubt it, but——"

"Yes, to-day,—a few hours ago."

My companion of the hour was plainly a well-bred man, for not a trace of mirth appeared on his face. "To-day," he said. "That is rather startling, but I can believe it. It has left a strong impression on you. You will excuse me if I say that you still look as if you had received some grave shock. Does it occur to you that you may not be well?—that——"

"I have thought of that. What I saw, however, or believed I saw, has certainly disturbed me. I could have made sure. I—that is, there still exists a test which will tell me if I am self-deceived or have seen an unreal being."

"That is interesting. But, by the way, this is rather singular talk for two entire strangers. I am George Weldon, a captain in the United States Army. I have been in London but a few hours."

I rose at once and shook hands with him, saying, in turn, "I am John Alden, an artist. I cannot say why I have blurted this out to you, a stranger, so personal a matter, but the talk led up to it quite naturally. You will excuse me, I trust. I have not recovered what I might call my mental equilibrium."

"I can't feel sorry that you have been moved to speak; but, now that you have done so, let me ask what test you alluded to, and why you did not apply it?"

"I was—well, I was afraid."

"I see. You dreaded lest you might find that it was your own brain which was disordered."

"Yes, you have put your finger on the truth."

"Perhaps you would rather we said no more of it?"

"No, I shall find the telling of what happened a relief, and to-morrow I shall know. There are things a man is willing to tell a stranger rather than a friend, because the unfamiliarity saves him from ridicule."

"You would be safe in any case," he returned, gravely.

"Thank you."

The man before me was a tall, handsome person, wearing a long, silky moustache, which fell away from the central line of the lip and left nearly in full view a mouth of remarkably gentle beauty, while all his other features were strong and manly and his complexion deeply tanned. I made up my mind that I would tell him.

"To-day," I said, "a woman of singular beauty came alone to my house and insisted on my painting her portrait. She gave me from twelve o'clock until dusk, insisting that she had no more time. I refused, and she merely took her place and bade me go on. Of course this was absurd. She was alone, said nothing of my charges, spoke few words. I am young enough to have some sense of romance, and I got caught at last with the notion of painting her. I knew well enough that it could be but a sketch at best, and——"

"Let me interrupt you. You said she was alone. Was she a lady?"

"Surely yes, if ever there was one."

"And handsome?"

"Yes, unusually handsome,—tall, a certain stately largeness of feature, perfectly straight as to figure, but with that slight forward carriage of the neck and head which is so uncommon and so gracious."

"Her eyes?"

"Larger than usual. And, one thing that is rare, she wore her hair coiled on the back of her head in antique fashion."

"The description is good, and brings to my mind a woman I know, and know very well. Certainly *she* would not have strayed alone into a painter's studio. But I stopped your story. Where is your ghost?"

"She is."

"Oh, not really? I mean, what grounds have you?"

"She disappeared while I was painting her,—faded away. I went and touched the place where she stood, and felt resistance to my hand where no one was visible; then in a moment or two after there was no resistance. She could no more have walked away unseen than you."

"It is a strange story. But where is your test?"

"Well, there is but one exit through the hall, and the maid at work in the hall saw no one pass."

"That might be."

"But take it with my own observation, and the fact that this woman, my sitter, was at times difficult to see, and then distinct."

"And your test?"

"Oh, I assume that I saw and painted a supernatural being. I am satisfied with the evidence of my senses. Now, if there is no picture, I have been ill and had some strange waking dream,—that is, I have been insane for an afternoon."

"But you have the picture?"

"Of course, if I painted it,—if it is there."

"Oh, I see! You were afraid to make sure."

"Yes, I left my easel after the woman vanished. I have been afraid to go to the studio again and decide the thing. If there is no picture, there was no woman. If there is a portrait, I painted a phantom. That is all of it."

"But why did you not ask some one of your family to look at it?"

"I am alone,—a bachelor. I——"

"Would you mind my seeing this picture? You ought not to sleep in doubt as to a thing of so much moment, and, to tell you the truth, the matter interests me immensely. Were I as frank as your countrymen are apt to be, I should say that either you are a subject for a doctor, or that you have seen something which is outside of our present human experience."

"I will go with you at once," I said, "if you will consider the whole affair as confidential. I have a feeling about it which makes me dread ridicule."

"You are safe with me. Let us go. And, by the way," he added, "would you mind telling me the woman's name?"

I hesitated, hardly knowing why.

"I will do so after you have seen it."

"Very well. Perhaps I have asked what I should not have done. And where is your studio?"

I named the place, saying that it could be reached by hansom in twenty-five minutes.

"Let us walk at least part of the way," he replied. "I should like to discuss this a little further. One can't talk in a hansom."

We pulled up at the top of Baker Street, and walked out Welling-ton Road to the Finchley Road, my companion asking me, as we went, a number of very shrewd questions. At last he was silent, apparently lost in the reflections aroused by my replies.

Then in turn I also put one or two queries, and finally inquired if he believed in the existence on earth of immaterial beings.

"But," he said, "for me there is no such thing as material or immaterial. We want a word which will include both. If you say that the immaterial shall be imponderable, that will not suffice, for the ether which we believe on good evidence to be the intermolecular atmosphere and look upon as material is imponderable by our scales, and yet may have relative weight. I can conceive of almost infinite gradations between the ponderable and that which we call imponderable only because we cannot yet weigh it."

"That is but a small part of the difficulty, for, after all, one can only see your ether in the mind's eye."

"Yes, it would be a mere intellectually apprehended ghost that was built up of the ether. It could not become manifest to the senses."

"Then there is no test which is satisfactory: I mean, none which a single man can apply?"

"None, I fear."

"Of course if several people saw and separately described a supposed phantom, that would suffice."



"Not for those who believe, as some do, that an intense impression on one man's mind is in some way competent to become present to that of another near him. Now, if the first man's vision was subjective, so would the other's be."

"I find that as hard to believe as I do a ghost."

"Well, let us talk of other things, and have our heads clear to observe what you have to show."

I said that the idea was a good one; and accordingly we fell into a very interesting chat about hunting, and the great West of America. I found my companion unusually agreeable, and recognized the value of his considerate counsel to keep off the subject with which our acquaintance had begun. This was still more clear to me as we entered my house, for I felt more calm and self-assured than I had done since I last left it.

I paused at the door of the studio, and then we entered. The vast room was in total darkness. As I moved across it, the aromatic odor was still at times perceptible, but was very faint. Of it I had said nothing, in the hope that if it still existed my companion might notice it unprompted by me.

"I will get a candle," I said, and found my way to the fireplace, where was a candelabrum. Striking a match, I lit the three candles it held. Captain Weldon picked it up, and, followed by me, walked to the easel, which we reached together, as he held up the lights before it.

There it was, in truth,—the tall, noble figure, the proud, pale features, the eyes that looked over and beyond you into distance. A splendid portrait. I shall never do its like again. As I took it all in, I cried, "It was true! I was sure of it!" But at the instant my companion's disengaged hand fell with a fierce clutch on my wrist, and, turning, I saw that his face was as the face of death, his head thrown back, his eyes staring, his jaw dropped.

"Good gracious!" I said, "what is it? Are you ill?"

He made no answer, but staggered back, let fall the candelabrum, which crashed on the floor as the candles went out; released my hand, broke away from me with a hoarse cry, and swiftly found his way to the door. I followed, only in time to overtake him at the hall-entrance; but, in reply to my rapid queries, he answered, hastily, "I cannot say. Do not stop me. I must go," and altogether seemed so frantic that, after letting him out, I thought it well to follow him on to the sidewalk. He seemed for a moment quite dazed, but suddenly, turning, ran like a madman towards the Finchley Road, turned the corner, and was lost to view. As I stood amazed, I could hear for a while that he was still running. It was vain to follow a man who was in such haste that he had fled without his hat.

Altogether, the day's events had been sufficiently surprising to a quiet artist like myself. When next morning I went into the studio, I was more and more astonished at my work the more critically I studied it. It seemed to have on it the labor of several long sittings; and this I could understand, remembering the passionate intensity with which I had painted; but there was also about it something unusual, which I could not define. As I stood before it, the door opened, and

Wilton, the Academician, came in. I went forward to welcome him, and then said, "Come and see this picture." The old fellow put on his glasses.

"Halloo!" he said. "How—what—who did that?"

"I painted it. What's the matter?"

"Nonsense! Who did paint it?"

It was not flattering.

"What do you think of it?"

"Think? The ghost of Rembrandt may have painted it. How refined it is! and what a solemn face, like Marie Antoinette going to execution! And the shadows,—the shadows! By George, who did do that?"

I was resolved not to tell my story to any one else; but to make Wilton believe that I had been the painter of the portrait seemed impossible. I suppose I showed at last some annoyance, for he said, "Well, we had best look to our laurels," and advised me to exhibit my picture, and then talked of other matters. At last he told me he would return in three days: "and, by the way," he said, "just keep that woman here awhile. I want to show it to M——."

Of course I agreed, and here for a while the matter rested. At the Athenæum I got with some difficulty Captain Weldon's address, but found that he had left London. I was annoyed at this, because if I had not delayed two days I should have found him. He had given an address (a banker's), but there they only knew that he had not left any orders, and thus his letters were held for him until he should give further directions.

A week later I was in my studio, when Captain Weldon's card was brought up to me. In a moment, to my pleasure, he followed it in person. He was dressed in deep mourning, and looked pale and ill. After the ordinary greetings, he said, "I am in great haste, but have called to explain to you my conduct of last week. The woman you painted was dying of a low fever the day you painted her. She died at or about six o'clock that afternoon. I was engaged to her. I cannot now discuss with you, as I may at some future time, this strange affair. I am in Europe on a military mission, and have been detained in England by having to accompany her mother and brother to Liverpool, where they have taken her body on the way home. To-night I leave for Berlin. I should say that my friends came to England two weeks before I did, and I presumed had gone to Paris, as they had meant to do. I reached London late in the day you saw me at the Club, too late to get my letters, and hence did not hear of Miss Dulaney's illness. This is all I can tell you, except that her mother and I had greatly desired her to sit for her portrait. One word more: you will kindly name your price for that picture. I must have it."

I said at once, "I have no price, and can accept none. Give me your address, and I will send it to you."

"I understand," he said. "You could not sell that picture. I take you frankly at your word." He thanked me, evidently with so full a heart that it was impossible to pity him too deeply. A few words settled the matter, and he left me with a promise to call on his way home. This he proved unable to do, as he was hastily recalled by the outbreak

of the civil war in America. As to the picture, it remained to my artist friends a mystery, and it was clear enough that it was by all of them regarded with a certain amount of doubt which at last made both me and them a little shy of the subject.

I heard from Captain Weldon now and then for two or three years, and after that not at all for a long while. At last came a letter, dated at Fort Yuma in Arizona, which recorded a fact so curious that I ask no man to believe it, and indeed I myself have it only on hearsay. I simply give a part of the letter in which it is spoken of. Colonel Weldon (for he had risen to this rank during the war) apologized for his long silence, and then went on to say,—

“I have hesitated a good while as to whether I should tell you the following fact. The war left destitute the mother and sister of the woman I was once engaged to. I was powerless to help them, as I have little beyond my pay. After some time I saw but one way to aid them, and the matter ended by my becoming engaged to Miss Dulaney. We were married a month ago. On my return hither, we rode into the fort quite late in the evening, very tired. After breakfast next day, Mrs. Weldon asked to see her sister's picture. I took her into a little study, where it hung over the mantel, as I had carried it with me in all my wanderings. As we entered the room, my wife said, ‘What a strange odor! It makes me feel faint.’ I thought I smelt it, but was not sure. I looked around for a cause, and then, to my amazement, perceived that the picture was gone. I mean that the canvas was there, and a good deal of color in splotches, but no trace of a portrait. I jumped on a chair and touched it, but it was not wet with paint or otherwise injured. My wife—and this is strangest of all—declares, nay, insists, that when we entered the face was dimly visible. This was probably an hallucination; but who can say? I am prepared to believe anything. My wife has been led to think that her sister's portrait was taken from a photograph, and is much distressed at its loss. She constantly recurs to the odor which we both perceived. I have, of course, discouraged all further talk on the subject, and profess to consider the fading of the picture as a disfigurement due to malicious mischief. That this is not my real opinion, you, at least, will readily understand.

“My wife is a rather nervous woman, much broken by the calamities of war in the South, and knew nothing of the circumstances under which the portrait was painted. I was, therefore, careful not to say that I had once before smelt the singular perfume just alluded to. I do not think I mentioned it to you, but I did recall it as like an odor which was distinctly perceptible in your studio. You know, of course, how easily an odor recalls a scene in which it has been once encountered.”

This letter goes on to speak further of this curious affair; but it is needless to quote more of it. I have described events as they occurred, and have, of course, been at some pains to misstate the names of those involved.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S WIFE.

OVER Babylon's grandeurs one grayness of ominous mist had out-rolled ;  
To their altars the priesthood had hurried, with visages white to behold ;  
All the mirth of the shawms and the sackbuts by night or by day did not ring,  
And the people were huddling in terror, for the curse had come down on the King.

They were wailing for Nebuchadnezzar, and none who had heard them could tell  
If to Asshur in anguish more noisy they prayed than to Nebo or Bel ;  
For the great sacred river was glooming, as though some fell deed had been done  
Between Supulat, god of Euphrates, and Shamas, god of the sun.

And in street, garden, square, or in temples, with their ziggurats' towering pride,  
There was lamentation more dreary than if Ishtar the deathless had died.  
They had heard how the Jewish Jehovah his burden of penance could bring,  
But they sought the old gods of their people, for the curse had come down on their King.

Through the city one deep desolation had banished by spells of af-fright  
The turmoil of traffic at noonday or the toss of the torches at night ;  
Over Nebuchadnezzar's vast army one sorrowing stupor would drowse,  
Alike on the helmeted spearmen and the archers with filleted brows.

In the market-place gathered no buyers where the fruit-sellers' booths overran  
With grapes from Kasvin and with quinces from the orchards of Is-pahan.  
All day on their slabs in the sunshine the eels from Aleppo would bake  
Unbought near the barbel from Tigris and the blackfish from Antioch Lake.

No Assyrian maiden looked longing at the riches that merchants un-fold ;  
At the agates and sards from Choaspes in their filigreed Indian gold ;  
At the onyxes from Susiana, at the Bactrian jewel or jar ;  
At the pearl-crusted broideries from Persia, or the muslins from Malabar.



With safety the ibex would wander on slopes where the tamarisk dwells;  
With safety at pools in the meadows would pause the pale-spotted  
gazelles;  
Where the eyes of the lions flamed yellow, their sleek bodies trembling  
to spring,  
No more betwixt reeds of the rivers the arrows from chariots would sing.

No more to far countries Caucasian the venturing huntsmen would ride  
Where the aurochs in aisles of the forest black-maned and majestic  
abide;  
No more on big beasts lying slaughtered, when dumb was the chase  
with its din,  
Would they pour the red sacred libations in homage to Nergal or Nin.

But I, in my bonds of bereavement, through reveries no cheer could  
console,  
I would pace my long tapestried chambers, on my couches of ivory  
would loll;  
And of throngs that lamented their monarch, unto none came affliction  
more keen  
Than to me, his moon-browed Amyitis, his beloved Babylonian queen.

He had wooed me with ardors of passion; he had won me to share his  
great throne;  
For I was imperial, a princess, with lineage as proud as his own.  
In the halls of my fathers he found me, at the first flush of girlhood's  
young dream,  
Where the mountains of Media are mighty and the domes of Ecbātana  
beam.

He had wed me and girt me with worship; he had built me, to ban my  
least cares,  
Hanging gardens where fountains of porphyry played splendid from  
flowery parterres;  
He had clad me in tissues like cobwebs, where diamonds like dew shed  
their sheens,  
And the robes of the slave-girls that fanned me were fit for the ransoms  
of queens.

Ah, many an evening together, when sunset its breezes would waft,  
In the dusk of my silken pavilions the wines of Armenia we quaffed.  
Flung below me, his dark brawny beauty from the tiger-skins gleamed  
to my gaze,  
And like wrath in the green eyes of dragons his armlets of emerald  
would blaze.

But 'twas love, only love, that illumined his looks when they dwelt  
upon mine,  
As I called him my conqueror, my hero, my warrior, my chieftain  
divine.

And we lifted our rose-wreathen goblets, we fed upon love's richest  
fruits,  
While from clustered acacias came floating the music of Palmyrene  
lutes!

At a word he would gladly have given me the choicest of war-plunders  
rare,  
Between walls of the seven-colored temples piled gorgeous in layer  
upon layer;  
Yea, his mandate had molten to please me—so dear was my whim's  
lightest nod—  
The two holy serpents of silver that coiled below Beltis, their god!

But the crafty Judæans he had vanquished wrought slow on the moods  
of his mind,  
Till I hated the wizardries guileful that round him like skeins they  
entwined;  
For at last he would come to me sombre where jovial erewhile he had  
come,  
And the beam in his dark eye was clouded, the laugh on his bearded  
lips dumb.

Then he spoke of a dream that had irked him, filled full of inscrutable  
threat,  
But I bade him disdain and forget it, as kings may disdain and forget;  
Yet alike my entreaties or counsels were emptier than air to his ears,  
And he passed from my portals desponding, though I strove to detain  
him with tears.

Through the morrows that brought him not near me, I languished with  
longing supreme,  
And I learned how an Israelite prophet had risen to interpret his  
dream;  
How monitions that teemed with disaster were spoke, and had stricken  
him as true,  
By the man that was now Belteshazzar, but once had been Daniel, the  
Jew.

And no more to my bowers would he wander, and ever my torment was  
worse,  
Till at last came the message of misery, the tidings that told of his  
curse.  
And hearkening I trembled for horror when they whispered with gasps  
of their King  
That he prowled the great park of his palace, a prone graminivorous  
thing! . . .

Then the frenzy of awe seized our city, as through it this grim story  
shot,  
And in tumult, alarm, consternation, Amyitis, the Queen, was forgot.

But I spake to my tiremaids with calmness ; I lulled their fierce fears  
into rest,  
Though my pulses like snared birds were fluttering, the heart was on  
fire in my breast.

So erelong to the chief of the eunuchs I bade that a message be sent :  
Untarrying he came where I waited, and low in obeisance he bent.  
And I said to him, "Aspenaz, hearken, as thou hast been faithful and  
true,  
For strange is the task that in secret thy Queen shall command thee to  
do."

Then I told my desire, and he started, and prostrate he fell in dismay,  
And "O Queen," he responded, "thy servant but lives thy behests to  
obey.  
Still, pause . . for too rashly thou temptest the gods in omnipotence  
dread—"  
But I towered o'er him, quivering with anger, and answered him,  
"Slave, I have said!" . . .

How loitered those leaden-shod moments till midnight made good her  
mute reign !—  
Till I passed the unchallenging swordsmen that guard my seraglio's  
domain.—  
Till I reached the great hall of the palace, with lines of dim lamps by  
the score  
Clinging chained to its big cedarn rafters and starring its long marble  
floor.

And here, through the vague light to meet me, came Aspenaz, potent  
with aid ;  
Though rebellious at first from sheer pity, at last he had humbly  
obeyed ;  
And together in silence we glided past walls painted fair, near and far,  
With the deeds of divine Hasiadra and of bull-slaying Idzubar.

But by narrower corridors wending, we gained the immense palace-park,  
And I felt the fresh breeze on my forehead rush fleet from the distances  
dark.  
Just beyond were the dense trees, and o'er them such night as no  
meanest cloud mars,  
For all of Chaldea to be wise by, spread legions of sibylline stars.

Then, terrace by terrace descending, we stood where the grass dripped  
with dew. . .  
"Now," I whispered to Aspenaz, "leave me." . . . He shuddered,  
and softly withdrew. . .  
Like a vanishing phantom I saw him retire and be lost up the slope . . .  
He had left me alone with my longing, my pain, my despair and my  
hope !

Then I dropped on my knees in the darkness and stretched forth my arms to its air,  
 As though I could clasp and possess it because my beloved one was there;  
 And I cried, "O my King, I await thee, whate'er be thy doom or thy dole!  
 Let the gods work their worst on thy body; not that do I seek, but thy soul!

"Come hating me—fear shall not fright me, nor pride my quick pardon efface!  
 Come mad—I will soothe thee to mildness; come brute-like—my arms will embrace!  
 Come deformed—I shall know thee and love thee! Come hideous—thou shalt not repel!  
 Thou art heaven to me always, though branded with scars from the forges of hell!"

... Was it wind in the trees? Was it movement of deer through the foliage dank?  
 I knew not, but listening and yearning, low down in the darkness I sank.  
 Still the sound, stealing nearer and nearer!—still the sound, creeping close!—but no sight,  
 Save the lawns that flowed black all about me, and the stars overhead that burned white!

Did I dream? Was the darkness dividing? Had he heeded the prayer I had prayed?  
 Then a voice. . . . It was his, yet so mournful! . . . "*Amyitis, art thou not afraid?*" . . .  
 "No! no! no!" I flashed forth . . . and so speaking, I gazed where he grovelled supine,  
 One rank detestation and horror, fit consort for earth-searching swine!

But I shrank not an instant before him; reluctant I leaned and embraced;  
 Had I clung to him glorious and stately, to spurn him now, marred and defaced?  
 And I cried, "Whatsoe'er thine abasement, low down to it, lord, let me bow!  
 Though the barrier between us be loathsome, still, love, I am I, thou art thou!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Night by night we met thus till the bondage that fettered and foiled him had ceased,  
 Till he rose once more—Nebuchadnezzar, he rose disenthralled and released. . . .  
 All the people have hailed him with welcomes till their gladness the land hath o'erflowed;  
 But on me, Amyitis, adored one, his dearest of smiles are bestowed!



## OLD DELAWARE.

I KNOW of no pleasanter way to spend the hazy days of late fall than in an idle, objectless ramble through Delaware.

Philadelphians and New-Yorkers who rampage here and there—to the Pacific coast or to Norway or up the Nile in search of new scenery—will pass twenty times a year on express-trains to Washington through the upper part of this little State, not knowing that a few miles below them are landscapes remote and peculiar in dream-like beauty as the old pictures of Arcady, and gray lichen-stained houses, rich in associations and legends which are more important to us than any in the Old World.

Even if they did know it, I am not at all sure that the crowd would turn down into these calm solitudes; for the American of the Middle and Southern States is apt to set but a small value on his own historic associations. When he is in England he is full of enthusiastic veneration for her ancient landmarks, but he never bethinks himself that he has any at home. Charles Kingsley, when he came to this country, said that the place which he most wished to see was John Bartram's garden. But how many Philadelphians could have guided him to it or know now its significant, pathetic story?

In England the spot is marked where William stumbled as he leaped on shore to begin a new era of pillage and murder, and American tourists go to find it. But how many of them ever made a pilgrimage to the rush-bordered bank of the Delaware where Minuit first set foot when he was sent by Oxenstiern to "found a country in which every man should be free to worship God as he chose"? Yet it was under the rule of those Swedes here in Philadelphia, and of the Quakers who followed them, that religious liberty first became a practical fact in the world. A different landing from that of the Conqueror, and a different ending!

New England, unlike ourselves, is not lacking in deference to her traditions. Indeed, while American literature is almost silent concerning the early days of the lower colonies, there has been a tireless, incessant issue from Boston presses of essays, novels, and poems bearing on the history of the Pilgrim Fathers and their sons. There is a little danger, as a result of this commendable effort, that the reading-population of the United States will fall into the belief that we all come from a common stock; that two centuries ago there were no towns here, no industries, no habits, manners, or religion, but those of the Puritans; that all our ancestors were kinsmen of Cotton Mather, and partook of his grim thin-blooded virtues and his godly hatred of witches, Quakers, and Indians.

Johns Hopkins University, during the last year or two, has done much to rouse the larger part of the country from its indifference to its own history by searching out, verifying, and giving enduring shape to the traditions of individual localities. This is the only effort, as far

as I know, to place the history of the Middle and Southern States on any sound and permanent basis.

Throughout the whole extent of these States the old houses are falling into decay, the old people are dying out, and nobody cares to write down their recollections and legends. They are so familiar and commonplace to us that we forget how picturesque and invaluable they would be to our grandchildren when they will essay to give life to the bare political facts of American history. There has been no Walpole nor Pepys among us to preserve the manners, dress, domestic life, or lingual peculiarities of those early days of Pennsylvania, Virginia, or Georgia.

No State, probably, is as guilty in this respect as Delaware. She has not even, as most of the others have, a county history which preserves the individual traits of the special colony.

Thomas Campanius, nearly two centuries ago, published in Sweden an account of the "Province of New Sweden," as it was in his day. Another old book, known to but a few historical students, in which some record of the upper counties of Delaware may be found, is the "Description of the Swedish Churches on the River De La Warr," published in Stockholm in 1759 by Israel Acrelius, and dedicated to the Most Mighty Louisa Ulrica, Queen of the Swedes, the Goths, and the Vends. In 1870, Francis Vincent, a loyal Delawarian, began a history of his native State, because, as he states, in two hundred and thirty-eight years no other person had thought proper to write it before him. But Mr. Vincent died when he had brought his history only down to 1664, and no hand has since taken up his work.

There is an historical society in Wilmington, it is true, and in almost every old town in the State some antiquarian collects papers and relics of the Swedes and Dutch; but no practical use has ever been made of them.

Yet Delaware itself is full of the traces, the *débris*, of the old times. There is no easier way for an idle man to fall back two centuries than to leave Philadelphia some October day and to journey slowly southward. The green, sluggish Schuylkill, creeping through the city, slimy with the washings of a dozen towns, and covered with grimy lumber- and marble-sloops, is the "fair river" which debouched so quietly into the bay that spring day when Hendrikson discovered it that he called it the "hidden creek." Yonder is Tinicum Island, where Governor Printz and Lady Armagot held their drunken and unruly court. The big wooden hotels of Gloucester come in sight, to which Philadelphia politicians swarm in March to hold caucuses and eat planked shad; close to them is the ground, overgrown now by great elms, on which the first house on the Delaware was built. As soon as he leaves behind the brick-yards, the yellow, box cottages, and the huge board advertisements in which the soul of the American shop-keeper rejoiceth, and enters country fields and lanes, he comes closer to the past. He begins to see, here and there, a low gray stone house sunken deep in the ground: these were built by some of Queen Christina's colonists after they had begun to grow rich in Nya Sverige. They usually lived for the first year or two in caves dug in a con-

venient hill-side, with a shed of planks as a frontage. Our traveller passes through the ancient town of Uplandt, which they founded, and which now is the thriving city of Chester.

If he have the good luck to be an unpractical, imaginative fellow, it will be easier for him when he enters Delaware to thrust aside the two centuries that rise between him and these early colonists. He will build again their cabins snuggled down between the low, wooded hills, and recognize the bluffs rising above the bay on which Hollanders, Swedes, and Finns built their little forts and fought their battles. Nature comes to his help in getting rid of the present. She knows nothing of centuries. She covers these hills with the same oaks and gum-trees of which Acrelius wrote; she hides the clay banks of the railway-cutting under the same golden-rod which the Lenapi used as a medicine; the same white yarrow which the Finns declared "wore out their land" thrusts its plumy blossoms now against the very wheels of the steam-engine.

If he wishes to go back to the very beginning of the story of Delaware, he will pass down through New Castle and Kent counties, and, crossing Sussex at a right angle, find himself at the mouth of Delaware Bay. If he is wise, he will go early in the morning to look for the first time at this great flood emptying itself into the sea. To hold it back, the Breakwater thrusts itself out from the land like a mighty black arm with the forefinger stretched out.

If the night has been stormy, a fleet of ships are crowding behind it for shelter. Now, in the soft morning air they begin to shake their white wings and scud noiselessly out and away: the low sun tinges them pink and purple as they cross the surf and are lost in the gray distance of the sea. To the right is Cape Henlopen, a dreary stretch of white beach, huge sand-dunes, and marshes, which are saffron and red now in the faint, early light: the light-house commands the bay and the sea: to the left a sluggish creek creeps down through the sand, and behind it is the ancient burgh of Lewes (or Lewistown), the quietest and oddest town in the United States.

One hot, fair August day just two hundred and seventy-seven years ago the first white man, Hendrik Hudson, turned his ship here into this bay from the sea, hunting for a short cut to China, but did not land. The next year Sir Samuel Argyll entered it, and named the "land and great gulf" for Lord De la Warr, then governor of Virginia. Four years later a Dutch adventurer, Captain Cornelis Mey, sailed into the mouth of the bay in his yacht the *Onrust*, naming the eastern cape for himself. The Indians watched these strange craft in terror, but none of the explorers landed. Two years afterwards, however, another Hollander, Hendrikson, sailed up the Delaware as far as the Schuylkill, and began the process of civilization by buying two slaves.

In 1613 a Dutch patroon, De Vries, pushed his boat laden with emigrants up into this sluggish creek, then a deep, strong river navigable for men-of-war, and named it Hoornkill. On the bank of this river, where Lewes now stands, was an Indian village. The Dutch for a few months were busy raising tobacco and harpooning the whales

that then came far up the bay. They then began to harpoon the Indians, who had received them hospitably. The end of that was, justly enough, that every white man was murdered. For many years their bones and skulls whitened the salt meadow where now stretches the crooked main street of Lewes.

The next spring the *Key of Kalmar*, a ship which came filled with sturdy Swedish laborers, under Minuit, to found a free city in the wilderness, after driving to and fro on the seas for nine months, entered the great bay. The tired voyagers, full of joy and hope, debarked at the mouth of Hoornkill Creek, and so fair and pleasant did the place appear to them that they named it *Paradysset*. Finding, however, in a few hours the skeletons of De Vries's colonists, they set sail again up the bay, making their first settlement at Christina. Other Swedish colonists soon peopled *Paradysset*.

The Swedes, not Penn, as a matter of fact, were the first foreigners who dealt justly with the Indians, buying their land and living peaceably with them. I have a strong suspicion, too, that Penn first gained the idea of his "city of brotherly love" from Oxenstiern while in prison in London. If not, the fact that he did found such a city in which religious liberty was a possibility, upon the very spot in the wilderness designated by Gustavus Adolphus fifty years before as the place where he would establish a refuge for the oppressed of all nations, is one of the most remarkable coincidences in history.

For thirty-four years this western bank of the Delaware was stained with blood by the battles between the Swedes and Dutch. Then both were forced to surrender to the English. In the mean time the hamlet of Lewistown grew slowly. One or two communities of the mystical religious sects which at that time thronged to this unknown wilderness from Germany settled here. The English commander, Carr, among his other atrocities, plundered the poor Labadist brethren at Hoornkill, leaving them naked and starving.

Under English rule the village grew into a town of importance. It had a fair Indian trade during colonial days. The great, many-gabled hipped-roofed houses which stand on the grassy back-streets now, surrounded by their quaint gardens full of hedges of clipped box, were stately dwellings a century ago, and belonged to merchants whose ships, sailing up the Hoornkill, brought spicy foreign odors into the quiet town. The descendants of these ancient worthies still live in some of the old houses, surrounded by mahogany sofas black with age, Dutch clocks, and priceless old Canton or Nankin ware. About sixteen years ago there was living in one of these houses a gentlewoman whose ninety-five years had dimmed neither her memory nor her wit. She remembered Lewes as a busy port of entry: she had seen her mother in brocade and roses set out to a ball in honor of Cornwallis's surrender. So closely do we jostle in these sleepy by-ways with the past.

After the battle of Brandywine, Lord Beresford, with the *Roebuck* and her tenders, invested the town, demanding forty beeves as its price of safety. A Tory dame addressed the crowd on the street from her balcony, passionately asking "whether they meant to sacrifice the town for a few old cows."



"Go back to your spinning-wheel, woman!" replied Richard Howard. The stout burghers howled defiance at the British, and the Roebuck opened fire. Beresford, supposing Lewes to be a fortified town, aimed his guns at a mud-bank which he mistook for a rampart. The day was cloudy, and he did not discover his error. No damage was done, except to a barn-yard which chanced to belong to the indignant Tory lady. The Roebuck was forced to put to sea without provisions, whereupon some local wit effervesced into song:

"What valiant deeds, ye sons of men,  
To scare a cow and shoot a hen!"

The joke is still laughed at by the boys of Lewes. They cherish a tradition, too, of a Spanish man-of-war which, when Cromwell was making war on Spain, fired into the village and put to sea again, threatening to return and blow it to hell. It has been fearfully looked for ever since.

Nothing ever changes or dies out in Lewes. In 1812, six cannon were brought from Wilmington and mounted before the little inn commanding the bay. There to-day is still the little inn, and there are the grisly cannon threatening every ship that enters the harbor. You may come back after twenty years to that inn, and you will be put in the same room with the pleasant wood fire, and the windows opening on the bay, and the unending procession of stately ships going up and down the great highway.

The town fell asleep more than a century ago, and never has wakened since. The cause of its lethargy was a singular one. The sand which rises out of the sea and marches steadily in dunes southward along this coast (as in the Landes of France), burying fields, houses, and pine forests sixty feet high, has been silently destroying for two centuries most of the lower rivers of Delaware. According to Vincent, Synapuxent and other estuaries in Sussex County, which are now marshes, mown every year, were once navigable for men-of-war.

The Hoornkill, as stated in a manuscript in the British Museum, began to diminish in depth more than a century ago. The noble river, set with beautiful islands, up which De Vries sailed, has now vanished, and only this creeping creek is left oozing through beds of marsh and quicksands. Many tales of horror are told in the town about these quicksands,—of how horses and men, once in their deadly grip, sink quickly and never are seen again.

The trade and life of Lewes died out with her river. The houses are occupied almost wholly by a community of pilots. These men receive high wages, their occupation compels them to be sober, and they spend their money, as a rule, on their families and homes. The houses are prettily painted, and the quaint old gardens, with their box borders and flower-beds set in boats and turtle-shells, all kept in prim order. But as all the men spend the days out in the pilot-boats waiting for ships, and the women have the Southern habit of staying in-doors, the town, large and orderly as it is, appears always wrapped in a cheerful, smiling sleep. You may pass at noon through all the shady lanes which serve

for streets in an almost unbroken silence. About one o'clock a drowsy stir is felt. The captain of every outgoing and incoming vessel waits at the Breakwater for orders, and usually comes up to Lewes for his last or first shore meal. The furnishing of dinner to these half-dozen silent brown men is the one industry of Lewes. "The Captains" are spoken of here as shoes are in Lynn, or cod at Gloucester.

The old brick jail, the Episcopal church, and the ancient McIlvaine mansion, on the outskirts of the town, are its most picturesque features. A few low, gabled, high-roofed houses still stand along the creek, which belong to the early occupation of the Swedes. About seven miles from Lewes is Rehoboth, an energetic Methodist summer city. But the swarms of mosquitoes which lie between will, I hope, long defend the drowsy old burgh from any innovation of the summer-boarder.

Coming up through Delaware in search of other old landmarks, the most energetic traveller must soon yield to the quieting atmosphere of comfort and calm in which the little State basks in the sun. He will see few signs of poverty or of great wealth. There are no manufactories outside of one or two towns. The population, for the most part, are a race of gentlemen farmers, who sip life in long, leisurely draughts, their chief interest being the slow blossoming and ripening of their peach-orchards. They have plenty of time for politics, books, and social enjoyment. Their wives and daughters have, in manner, the indescribable *cachet* of Southern women, but, never having been served by slaves, they lack the languid drawl of their Maryland sisters, and, having escaped the horrors of the civil war, they have also missed the acidity and sharpness which so often give a bitter twang to the character of the modern Virginian. The negroes are fat and well fed, and on Sundays crowd the streets of every town in more costly garments than those of the people who pay them well for doing nothing.

The whole State, more than any other, carries an air of affluent peace. Great forests of oak-, gum-, and nut-trees cover the hills in the north, the swamps in Sussex County are filled with game and pierced with inlets, the breeding-grounds of the finest oysters and fish; between the hills and these swamps peach-orchards and vineyards sweep across the entire State, from the sea to the bay. In early spring the whole of the brown slopes of Kent and Sussex seem to be covered with light veils of rosy pink. When it happens that the sky is gray, and swift flurries of snow fall through the blooms, the picture is beyond measure airy and charming.

In the fall of the year the surface of the country, with those countless vineyards and orchards, purples and crimsons into a glow of rapturous color. Artists who hunt through Brittany for new effects of fields and peasants should come to a Delaware peach-orchard in early September, with its heaped fruit and mulatto gatherers.

This State has been in no haste to throw off any old tradition. She is still divided into "hundreds," according to the plan in use among the Saxons before Alfred. In the jail-yards of her county towns the whipping-posts introduced two centuries ago are still busy at work. Her sons do not wander away West to better their fortunes. The de-

scendants of the Rodneys, the Ridgleys, the Jaquetts, the Bayards, the Du Ponts, and other early Swedish, Dutch, and French colonists, still live on their farms.

Wilmington, through its vast manufacturing interests, is better known throughout the country than any other Delaware town. It stands on the site where Minuit founded the first Swedish village, naming it Christina for the little queen. The church, built when Philadelphia was "a clever little town," still stands close to the Philadelphia and Wilmington Railway where it enters the city. Every street in Wilmington has its historic or traditionary interest. On the fields near the river Campanius saw the "rattlesnakes three yards long, with heads like a dog's, that could bite off a man's leg clean as by an axe." Fire-flies on dark nights then came across these fields, "so huge," states the learned doctor, "that the soldiers on guard at Fort Christina took flight, thinking an army was coming with torches."

In the old Swedish graveyard rests Christopher Springer, a Swedish nobleman who was kidnapped in London, thrown into the hold of a ship bound to Virginia, and there sold as a slave. Escaping after many years, he made his way on foot to the Swedish colony at Christina, and there remained. This was the basis of Reade's story of "The Wandering Heir."

To Christina, too, often came Lady Armagot, the daughter of the gigantic Governor Printz, when he "played the master on Tinicum Island over New Sweden." Even after all these years, some distinctive flavor of this woman's beauty, pride, and stubbornness reaches us. When her huge drunken father ceased to be a nuisance in the world, and was hid away, much to its relief, in the eternal silence, Armagot abjured her husband, Papagoija, and set up a principality at Printzdorp, gathering a Swedish colony of subjects about her. Soon afterwards came the bloody battles between the Swedes and Dutch at Fort Christina. The Dutch remained victors, sole masters of the western coast of the Delaware. The Swedish men were killed, their women outraged, and their houses left in ruins. Madame Armagot, however, kept the invaders at bay during her lifetime, which was fast and furious.

After Sir Robert Carr had in turn conquered the Dutch, English settlers took possession of Christina, which now became Wilmington. It was the birthplace of many home-keeping men whose wisdom and bravery were brought out by the Revolutionary crisis. Major Peter Jaquett was foremost among these: he served under Washington in every battle which he fought. De Kalb died in his faithful arms.

Captain Hugh Montgomery, sailing from this port on the brig Nancy, was sent by Robert Morris to Porto Rico for Spanish arms. At St. Thomas Captain Montgomery heard that independence was declared, and startled the foreign ships in the harbor by pulling down the British flag and running up a rough flannel imitation of the stars and stripes, which had been made on board, and was saluted with thirteen guns. He was the first man to display the national colors in alien waters. The Nancy was attacked on her return, at the mouth of the Delaware, and the captain blew her to atoms to keep her cargo from the British.

A large number of French refugees of noble birth fled to this country in 1790 and remained in Wilmington. You can find hints of their blood in the olive skins, the vivacity, the *esprit*, of many citizens of the old town, though their names have taken an American spelling and sound.

Dover, the capital of the little State, is probably the most beautiful inland town in the United States. Its meanest streets are fairly embowered in trees; stately avenues of elms or maples give dignity to the cheap houses in the suburbs, while the larger dwellings are set within extensive grounds, planted with an unusual fine simplicity and artistic effect. They are homes, not houses, and face the stranger with a significance of good-breeding and hospitality which some of our wealthiest mansions lack. The older part of the town, according to the Southern fashion, is built around a little mall or park; many of the old dwellings are still surrounded by the quaint flower-beds bordered with box which were the delight of gardeners in the days of the Stuarts. On the outside of the town stands the venerable Christ Church, beneath whose solemn shadow "the forefathers of the hamlet sleep," who, however, were anything but rude, if we are to believe their ponderous epitaphs, but possessed, rather, of all the high courtly virtues of a race of well-bred saints. The place of their rest is so quiet, the winds blow and the birds chirp so cheerfully above them, and the trees spread their huge limbs with such perpetual benediction of peace, that here, surely, if anywhere, the tired wayfarer would grow in love with easeful death.

When Acrelius wrote, in 1759, Dover had but one hundred houses. It has grown steadily since then in wealth, refinement, and content. There is an admirable quality of unpretentious solidity in the little city. She has few industries, but they are carried on with great thoroughness. Even in the matter of preserved food, Dover supplies France with many a *bonne-bouche*, and England with her national plum-pudding in enormous quantities, better than any eaten by bluff King Hal himself.

Once a year the State fair is held here and the town is possessed by a sort of bucolic frenzy; but at all other times it wears the air of complacent repose, of well-to-do smiling content, which characterizes the whole State.

But the essence, the typical expression, of Old Delaware is to be found in New Castle. You should see this town first from the bay on an October evening, when the sun, setting behind the ancient burgh, lights up the tiers of dark, quaint houses that rise from the edge of the water and the lines of yellow oaks and blood-red maples which fill the sombre streets with color. The angry tides of two centuries have slowly eaten away part of the old town. Fort Casimir, built here by Stuyvesant in 1653, and the fields about it on which Swedes and Dutch fought for it, have long ago crumbled into the fast-encroaching water. Drufve Udden, as it was called in Sweden, and New Amstel in Holland, has had a more romantic history than any other American town. It was long the bone of contention between the two kingdoms. When the Dutch had at last secure possession of it, it was laid out under



Governor Jaquett, and is therefore the oldest town in Delaware. The city of Amsterdam became sponsor for this new-born burgh. It formally undertook to send over colonists, to build for them fortifications, public works, a church, school-house, storehouse, and market; to provide them for one year with clothing, seeds, and food; to appoint officials and police, etc. Their High Mightinesses the Burgomasters of Amsterdam kept their part of the pact. Large bodies of colonists were sent out under Alricks and d'Hinoyossa. But fever attacked them. Alricks soon proved to be a tyrant, and the poor emigrants escaped as they could to Virginia. The Burgomasters continued to send over ships filled with colonists, many of whom died of starvation in the model town. They also imported hundreds of slaves direct from Africa for the use and profit of the citizens of New Amstel.

When the town was ten years old, it was captured by the English under Sir Robert Carr. The Dutch soldiers and many citizens were sold as slaves in Virginia. The English, having driven the wretched Dutch colonists out of their houses (as *they* had driven the Swedes), went into them, like robber crabs, and New Amstel was dubbed New Castle.

The town retains the old lines on which it was laid out by Jaquett, but few traces of the Dutch *régime* remain. An old house, built with tiles from Amsterdam and said to have been the residence of d'Hinoyossa, was partially destroyed last winter. The old court-house, Swedish Church, graveyard, and almshouses, surrounded by hoary old elms, form the nucleus of the town, as in the days of the Dutch rulers. In the square behind the court-house offenders were publicly whipped, and both Dutch and English governors are said to have looked on the punishment with satisfaction when the offence was against themselves. So intolerable was the rule of some of these petty tyrants that revolts were frequent. One (against Lord Lovelace) was led by a Jan Konigsmarck, known as the Long Finn. But the village Hampden was defeated, and was scourged in this square, branded, and sold into perpetual slavery in the Barbadoes.

Into this rough world came many strange signs and sounds from the darker one beyond. Acrelius tells us of a miraculous tree in New Castle Hundred on which rain fell incessantly for a year while all else was dry. The wicked captain of a ship, while in this harbor, was attacked visibly by the devil in sight of the crew and townspeople. Although he had himself lashed to the mast and the words of the Bible were fairly shouted at him, he was carried off in a tempest of rain and lightning and seen no more of men.

William Penn received a grant from James, Duke of York, of the town of New Castle, with all the land lying within a circle of twelve miles from that centre. The yearly rent was to be a rose to be given the duke every Michaelmas. Penn crossed the ocean to see his principality, and landed at New Castle one October day in 1682. The house is shown in which it is claimed that he slept the first night in the New World. The original grant from the Duke of York to Penn hangs in a wooden frame in the hall of a modest little house in New Castle. Its owner, Henry Rogers, Esq., has in his possession many

original documents bearing on our colonial and Revolutionary history, among them private letters concerning military movements from Washington, Lafayette, Greene, and Arnold. The day will come (when the nation shall have passed through the preparatory stage of money-getting to higher classes in the school of life) when it will hold such documents as these of incomparable value. That time, more's the pity, is not now.

Many houses in New Castle date back to the days of the splendor of the early English governors. They are solid and massive, with wide halls and corridors in which a modern city house would be lost, decorated with the ugly stiff carved fluting in doors, cornices, and window-frames, flush with the walls, which was so much used in this country under the old Quaker *régime*.

If our traveller have that liking, common to quiet, leisurely people, for making the acquaintance of dead men, he will find no better field than in the church-yard and old legends of New Castle. Dignitaries of Revolutionary and colonial days crowd upon each other in their graves about the little old church, dumbly asking his attention,—governors, signers of the Declaration, chancellors, and naval heroes, each with a quota of virtues that would kill the chances for office of any modern politician.

"Traveller!" peremptorily demands one commanding monument, "what do you inquire? Know that our friend Hercules Coutts, holding high civil and military trusts in this colony, of temper forbearing, of manner courteous, yielded to the fiat of Fate through bilious fever in 1707." Near at hand lies the wife of a sheriff who "caused to Hew and Hire to place this Stone," to state that she "came of the ancient and creditable London family of Spauldings, that her chastity was strict, her œconomy prudent, and her piety without ostentation." The earthly and spiritual claims to notice of "a distinguished jurist and agriculturist" are set forth by a marble pile composed of Jersey cows, pumpkins, corn, a book, and a dove. Buried almost out of sight in the rank grass are the sunken, nameless head-stones beneath which lie the old Dutch rulers.

I know of no place (except a certain old church-yard in Virginia) where the dead seem so alive, with all their ancient state and little pathetic vanities, and hunger for the approval and notice which can never come to them again, as here among these long-forgotten dignitaries of New Amstel. When you sit in the dusk of the evening among the mouldering head-stones, you look out upon the same old square which was familiar to them. The brown leaves are blown by the wind from the bay down from the same elms and oaks under which they walked; there, on those flag-stones, brave Jan Konigsmarek was beaten nigh to death, and yonder sat Lord Lovelace, calmly eying his tortures. In those houses fronting on the bay, the Dutch patroons, we are told, cruelly abused the slaves imported from the Congo for their use, and out of those same houses Carr and his soldiers drove the Dutchmen, selling them in the square as slaves to the owners of vessels sailing South. That grassy, elm-shaded square, across which a lazy negro saunters, echoed to the footsteps of all the colonial and Revolutionary

officials. The grass and the elms remain, but the very name of New Amstel is forgotten, and beneath our feet lie the ancient worthies. As the dusk gathers, and we turn our steps homeward, one can fancy that out of every grave comes a shadowy arm, and a voice crying, like Hercules Coutts, "Traveller, what do you inquire? Behold, here am I."

I have nothing to say of New Delaware, or of the great industries that ally her to the real world. It is a comfort to escape from the real world and great industries now and then.

Wilmington, as everybody knows, has her powder-mills, her iron-, car-, and carriage-works, which employ legions of operatives. Dover has her large manufactories, and even Georgetown sends her wooden plaques and plates by millions all over the world,—to artists in Italy and to savages at the Cape of Good Hope.

But our quiet October ramble has nothing to do with industries or statistics. They only hinder us as we endeavor to sketch old Delaware as she lies calmly sleeping in the autumnal haze, bound in by glittering salt water, and to outline her half-forgotten story in the hope that some other hand may be moved to write it with accuracy and precision.

## OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP

WITH READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

L. C. R. wants to know who wrote the song "*La Donna è mobile*."

This song occurs in Verdi's opera of "*Rigoletto*," the libretto of which, like Tom Taylor's melodrama of "*The Fool's Revenge*," is an adaptation from Victor Hugo's "*Le Roi s'amuse*." The music, of course, is Verdi's. The words are an amplification of the famous couplet,—

*Souvent femme varie,  
Bien fol est qui s'y fie,*

which Hugo has incorporated into his drama, and which tradition affirms that Francis I. wrote with a diamond upon the window of the château of Chambord. But Brantôme, who saw the writing, says that the words were simply "*Toute femme varie*." (Virgil had already said "*Varium et mutabile semper femina*.") If the words were really engraved with a diamond, this is the first instance on record when the diamond was used for that purpose. There is a pretty story to the effect that Francis's sister, Queen Margaret of Navarre, entered the room as he was scratching the ungallant couplet and indignantly declared that she could cite twenty instances of man's inconstancy. "Nay, that is not to the purpose," said Francis: "cite me rather one instance of woman's constancy." "Can you cite me an instance of her inconstancy?" asked the queen. Now, at this very moment there was languishing in prison in Paris a gentleman of the court, and

his wife, one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting, was reported to have taken advantage of her husband's disgrace to elope with his page. At all events, page and lady had disappeared. When Francis mentioned this fact, Margaret declared that time would vindicate the lady. The monarch laughed. "If within a month," he said, "her character is vindicated, I will break this pane of glass and grant thee any boon thou wishest." Many days had not elapsed when it was discovered that not the lady but her husband had fled with the page. She had exchanged clothes with the former in prison, and was even now in his place. Margaret claimed the husband's pardon, and the king destroyed the pane of glass.

Popular proverbs of all nations are full of unkind allusions to woman. It is rare indeed to find a popular saying that speaks well of the sex. "Women are variable as April weather," say the Germans; "Women, wind, and fortune soon change," say the Spaniards; while the English equivalent is "A woman's mind and April wind change oft." Women are talkative: "A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail" (English). "A woman's strength is in her tongue" (Welsh). "Women are never at a loss for words" (German). "Three women and three geese make a market" (Italian). "Foxes are all tail and women are all tongue" (French). "All women are good Lutherans: they would rather preach than hear mass" (Danish). "A woman's tongue is her sword, and she does not let it rust" (Chinese). They are great blabbers: "To a woman and a magpie tell what you would speak in the market-place" (Spanish). "A woman conceals what she does not know" (English). "Women can keep a secret, but it takes a great many of them to do so" (American). They have little logic, yet their intuitions are sometimes valuable: "Women are wise off-hand, fools on reflection" (Italian). "Take a woman's first advice, but not her second" (French). "A woman's counsel is no great thing, but he who does not take it is a fool" (Spanish). "Summer-sown corn and women's advice turn out well once in seven years" (German). "Women are watches that keep bad time" (Ibid.). "It is sometimes right even to obey a sensible wife" (Servian). To the latter proverb there hangs a tale. A Herzegovinian once asked a kadi whether a man ought to obey his wife, and was answered in the negative. Then said the Herzegovinian, "My wife pressed me this morning to bring thee a pot of beef suet, but I rejoice to know that I have done well in disobeying her." "Verily," returned the kadi, "it is sometimes right even to obey a sensible wife." Women are quarrelsome and self-willed: "Because is a woman's answer" (English). "He that has a wife has strife" (French). "What a woman wills, God wills" (Ibid.). "Gie her her will, or she'll burst" (Scotch). They are vain and greedy of praise: "Women and maidens must be praised, whether truly or falsely" (German). "Every woman would rather be handsome than good" (Ibid.). They are untrustworthy: "Beware of a bad woman, and put no trust in a good one" (Spanish). They must be handled roughly. Here are a Latin, an Italian, and an English couplet which all teach the same ungallant doctrine:

*Nux, asinus, mulier simili sunt lege ligata,  
Hæc tria nil recte faciunt si verbera cessant.*

*Donne, asini e noi  
Vogliono le mani atroce.*

*A spaniel, a woman, and a walnut-tree—  
The more they are beaten, the better they be.*



Much wiser is the Scotch saying, "You may ding the deil into a wife, but ye'll ne'er ding him out o' her." With such a catalogue of faults, it is no wonder that in French proverbial philosophy "A man of straw is worth a woman of gold," that the Germans think "There are only two good women in the world: one of them is dead, and the other is not to be found," and complain that "A bag of fleas is easier to keep guard over than a woman," that the Italians say, "Women rouge that they may not blush," and "He that loseth his wife and a farthing hath a great loss of his farthing," that the Spaniards say, "There is only one bad wife, and every man thinks he has her" (the Scotch, by the way, are so surprisingly gallant as to quote the same proverb with only the word "good" substituted for "bad"), and that the proverbs of all nations unite in warning the bachelor, "Marry in haste and repent at leisure." Yet, after all, perhaps the wisdom of the ages is summed up in the Portuguese "Women are supernumerary when present, and missed when absent."

L. M. G. asks, What is the meaning of the word "Jingoism"?

In the Basque language the word "Jingo" means God, and is a common form of adjuration. Probably the English caught the oath "by Jingo!" from the Basque sailors. But Halliwell derives the word from a corruption of St. Gingoulph. The word "Jingoism" has acquired a new meaning in British politics since 1877. At the height of the anti-Russian excitement, when Lord Beaconsfield, the premier, was determined to protect Turkey from Russia, while Gladstone advocated non-interference, a song became very popular in the English music-halls, the refrain of which was,—

We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too.

"Jingo" was derisively cast as a nickname at the warlike party, and was proudly accepted by them. The term has ever since been applied to those who pander to popular favor by noisy advocacy of popular measures.

The following parody of the song appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do,  
We've Protestant and Catholic, Turk, infidel, and Jew;  
We've "God" and "Mammon," "Allah," "Buddha," "Brahma," and "Vishnu:"  
We've collared all the deities, so what can Russia do?

L. O. R. asks whether Wm. R. Spencer's ballad of Beth-Gelert celebrates an historical fact.

Gelert or Gellert, according to Welsh legend, was a greyhound belonging to Prince Llewellyn, son-in-law of King John of England. One day the prince found his child's cradle empty and the dog's mouth smeared with blood. In sudden fury he slew Gelert, but the next moment revealed the child unhurt, and beside it the body of a wolf whom the dog had slain. Llewellyn, in self-reproach, raised a monument over the faithful brute, and to this day the place is called Beth-Gelert, or Gelert's grave. W. R. Spencer's ballad of "Beth-Gelert" is well known. But the name was really derived from St. Celert, a Welsh saint of the fifth century, to whom the church of Llangeller is consecrated. And the legend itself is not indigenous to Wales, but in one form or another reappears in the folk-lore of almost every Aryan nation. It was borrowed from the Panchatantra,

a collection of Sanskrit fables, by the compiler of the "Gesta Romanorum," thence passed into a popular tale throughout Europe, and in different countries was localized and individualized. Its Sanskrit origin is betrayed by the fact that in the "Gesta Romanorum," and in many of the local legends, a serpent takes the place of the wolf. There is little in accordance with European sentiments in a dog killing a serpent. But in the original Sanskrit a favorite mangoust or ichneumon kills the serpent. Among the ancient Hindoos the mangoust, which in its wild state kills and eats serpents, was domesticated. The same story is told in the *Hitopadesa* (iv. 13), but the misjudged animal is an otter. In the Arabic it is a weasel, in the Mongolian a polecat, in the Persian a cat.

"WHAT is the Dunmow Flitch?" asks C. R. R.

At the church of Dunmow in Essex County, England, a flitch of bacon used to be given to any married couple who after a twelvemonth of matrimony would come forward and make oath that during that time they had lived in perfect harmony and fidelity. The origin of the custom is lost in the mists of antiquity. By some it is dubiously referred to Robert Fitzwalter, a favorite of King John, who revived the Dunmow Priory at the beginning of the thirteenth century; but it seems quite as likely that the good fathers themselves, rejoicing in their celibacy, instituted the custom as a jest upon their less fortunate fellows. The earliest recorded case of the awarding of the flitch is in 1445, when Richard Wright, of Badbury, Norfolk, a laborer, claimed and obtained it. But that there had been earlier cases of similar success is clearly evidenced by this couplet in Chaucer's "Wife of Bath:"

The bacon was not fet for them, I trow,  
That some men have in Essex at Dunmow.

The custom seems to have lapsed and been revived from time to time at considerable intervals until 1763, when the lord of the manor discountenanced it, and removed what were known as the "swearing-stones," upon which the couple knelt to take the requisite oaths. In 1855, however, Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist, himself the author of a story called "The Dunmow Flitch," resolved to revive the custom, and a couple of flitches were in that year given away with much burlesque ceremony. But the popular interest could not be reawakened, and though in 1877 and in 1880 the flitch was again contested for, the contemporary reports tell us that "the attendance was poor and the true joyous spirit was absent." The custom of awarding a prize of this sort for wedded faithfulness is not peculiar to Dunmow. For a century the abbots of St. Meleine, in Bretagne, gave the flitch, and a like trophy, with a gift of meal or corn, was enjoined to be given by the charter of the manor of Whichenouvre, in Stafford, granted in the time of Edward III. The manors of Whichenouvre, Scirescot, Redware, Nether-ton, and Cowler were held of the earls of Lancaster by Sir Philip de Somerville on condition that he should maintain and sustain one bacon flyke to be given to every man or woman after the day and year of their marriage were past, provided they could subscribe to certain conditions too long to reprint. Addison sets forth the whole charter in the *Spectator*, No. 607, October 15, 1714.

J. J. P. asks a question "which has long troubled" him: "Was Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea at the crossing of the Israelites?"

The question has troubled many Biblical scholars, and is still unsettled. The account in Exodus says nothing of the destruction of the king in person, though the passage "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea" (Psalm cxxxvi. 15)

seems to imply that Pharaoh perished with his army. Charles S. Robinson, in his "Pharaohs of the Bondage and the Exodus," leans, however, to the contrary opinion. It is curious that the manner of the death of Menephtha (son of Rameses II.), with whom the Pharaoh of the Exodus is now usually identified, is not recorded in profane history, that his mummy has never been found, and that there is no evidence that it ever lay in his tomb at Thebes.

F. J. asks, "How many wives had Julius Cæsar, what were their names, and what is the order in which they come?"

Four: First, Cossutia, a lady whom he must have married in extreme youth, for he divorced her in B.C. 83, when he was but seventeen, to substitute—

Second, Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, a marriage which was followed by his proscription by Sulla, his flight from Rome, and his final reluctant pardon with the remark from the grim dictator that "in that boy there are many Mariuses." Cornelia died in B.C. 68, and was succeeded next year by—

Third, Pompeia, a relative of Pompey, and a grand-daughter of Sulla, who was divorced B.C. 61, on suspicion of carrying on an intrigue with Publius Clodius. It was in reference to this divorce that Cæsar made his famous remark, "Cæsar's wife should be above suspicion." Cæsar's last wife was—

Fourth, Calpurnia, whom he married B.C. 59, and who survived him.

In one of Gilbert's "Bab Ballads" A. J. F. has found an allusion to "Poet Close and Mr. Tupper," and he writes to ask, Who may Poet Close be?

Poet Close,—John Close, the son of a Westmoreland butcher, who on the marriage of the late Lord Lonsdale sent him some verses of which these are a specimen:

"The Honorable William Lowther,  
Our Secretary at Berlin, he,  
Respected much at Prussia's court,  
Kept up our dignity.  
His nephew, now Lord Lonsdale,  
Upon his wedding-day,  
We wish all health and happiness,  
All heartily we pray."

This poem at once lifted Close into fame and fortune. The Hon. William Lowther, perhaps because he had not read the lines, but only the accompanying appeal for assistance, used his influence with Lord Palmerston, who placed the name of "John Close, Poet," on the Pension List. Palmerston never heard the last of it: "Poet Close" became a standing jest with the English humorists. The pension was withdrawn soon after.

J. O. G. Duffy writes, "For the information of C. G., whose query is published in your April issue, permit me to state that officers of the French Academy occupy the same relative positions as the president, vice-president, treasurer, librarian, and secretary of any learned body. The officers, who are called 'Immortals,' are elected by their colleagues. There is a corps of assistants to the librarian, secretary, and treasurer, who are paid employees, without any other distinction than the recognition of their equipment for the discharge of their duties. It should be remembered that the (literary) Academy is only one of six academies of forty members each, composing the Institute of France; but at the same time it is the most distinguished, and the greatest honor attaches to election in this department."

## THE ONE HUNDRED PRIZE QUESTIONS.

FROM all over the country come complaints that the daily and weekly newspapers are attempting to answer, with more or less (usually with less) correctness, the questions here propounded. The newspapers are not to blame for this. But the correspondents who send these queries, and who are probably contestants for the prizes, are seeking to gain an unfair advantage. As one of our subscribers urges, "I do not think this a proper proceeding, and write to protest against it. It is not fair or just. For instance, after much labor, I have succeeded in solving two puzzling questions, and have them both in my list, when, lo! here are the answers given to every competitor." We know that we can appeal to all editors who may see this notice to refrain from answering queries based upon Lippincott's Prize Questions, and indeed we have received assurances from two gentlemen who have unintentionally erred in this way that they will keep a sharp lookout in the future.

The first ten queries in the present batch are in regard to the authorship of the articles in this number. The number, it will be seen, is a No-Name or anonymous one. Every article is contributed by an author of established reputation. All the writers are American. Eight are living, two have been numbered among the honored dead. One of the latter, an author of great eminence, has a poem, copied from the album of an intimate friend, which, so far as we know, has never before been published.

61. Who is the author of "The Old Adam"?
62. Who is the author of "From Bacon to Beethoven"?
63. Who is the author of "Ding Dong"?
64. Who is the author of "Mr. Sonnenschein's Inheritance"?
65. Who is the author of "The House of Hate"?
66. Who is the author of "The Portrait and the Ghost"?
67. Who is the author of "A Little Child's Talk"?
68. Who is the author of "Weeds"?
69. Who is the author of "Nebuchadnezzar's Wife"?
70. Who is the author of "Old Delaware"?
71. Did Byron ever write a romance called "The Vampire"?
72. What are the "frost" or "vintage" saints?
73. What is a Fool's Paradise?
74. What was the Red Spectre of the Tuileries, and in what poem is mention made of him?
75. What is Jedwood justice? Cite some analogous expression.
76. Who was the Lady of Kynast? What famous poet made her the subject of a ballad? And name three other famous poets who have written ballads on an analogous legend.
77. What was the Peacock Throne?
78. Who was the Princess Ilse?
79. Who was the original of Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil"?
80. Who wrote the verses beginning,—

There is no death—the stars go down  
To rise upon some fairer shore,  
And bright in heaven's jewelled crown  
They shine for evermore.

And to what famous author have they been falsely attributed?



## BOOK-TALK.

IS an educated taste a curse or a blessing? Which is most to be envied,—the epicure over his terrapin and Amontillado, or the boy in the rapture of his first *bonbon*? As we grow older we learn to distinguish more certainly and more precisely the shades of difference between great writers and poor, to apprehend the deeper meaning of sage and poet; we grow wiser,—perhaps (for even this may be doubted),—but are we any the happier for it? *Le plaisir du critique ôte le plaisir d'entendre les belles choses*, says Fénelon. We call this or that great genius a magician, we speak of the enchanted wand by which he waves us into faëry-land. Ah, well! there is a real faëry-land, and we have all known it (for we too were born in Arcadia), where life is strange and new and full of delirious transport, where all the earth shouts for joy, where the morning stars, singing together, are not so sweet as the voices of the men and women whom we know, where every youth to every maid, and every maid to every youth, is that divine possibility which in some one of them shall soon be realized,—that object towards whom all tumultuous passions shall trend, in whom love and awe and reverence shall find an abiding-place, so that all fleshly cerements shall fade away, and Soul stand naked before naked Soul, glorious and unabashed, and the Infinite be revealed. What ho! without there, Seneschal, a stoup of wine,—for the Reviewer is old and wan and his heart is chill, and only the generous vintage of Oporto and Bordeaux may warm him to some dim remembrance of the splendors of his prime,—when, reeling with his passions and his imaginations, he first came upon the theatre of action. But all around him and about him there are still beings such as erstwhile *he* was,—living in that faëry-land which is now only a remembrance and a regret, youths in the first flush of that glorious intoxication, who reck not of the choice bouquet of the preciouslest wines, who know not Bordeaux nor Port, to whose virgin palates the meanest *vin ordinaire* is as some divinest nectar.

Does the reader see the parable? Does he recognize that the Reviewer is comparing the great writers to Bordeaux and Port, which only the educated palate can fully appreciate, and the lesser writers to *vin ordinaire*, which the educated would reject, yet which titillates all the nerves and glands of the uneducated with a joy that the former would give Golconda to reconquer? The young reader has a real intellectual advantage over his elders. He cares little for the subtler beauties of style, for great thoughts, for vivid insight, for any novelty in incident or situation, for any real approach of mind to mind. Enough if hero and heroine dance and flirt, love, quarrel, kiss, and make it up, if there be laughter and tears, sunshine and moonlight, open compliment and whispered adulation, the sheen of pretty dresses and of golden hair, the ring and the ripple of small-talk,—with a due allowance of incidents, accidents, and startling transitions. The alert imagination of youth catches fire at a word. Reader and novelist meet each other half-way: the novelist provides plot and characters, the reader dowers them with life and likelihood.

The Reviewer has been listlessly glancing over a number of new novels, "Only the Governess," by Rosa Nouchette Carey, "Marvel," by the Duchess, "Pleasant Waters," by Graham Claytor (all of which come to him from the Messrs. Lippincott), "Roy's Repentance," by Adeline Sergeant, and "Mona's Choice," by Mrs. Alexander (from Mr. Henry Holt), "Gladys, a Romance," by Mary Greenleaf Darling (from D. Lothrop). Some of them bored him less than others, but all were hard to read, and still harder to keep in mind for four-and-twenty hours after the end had been reached. Was Mona's choice a good one? what did Roy repent of? was it Gladys or the governess who was in love with the magnificent Dr. Stephen Forbes? why is the Duchess's new novel called "Marvel," and Mr. Claytor's "Pleasant Waters"? Candidly, he might find it difficult to answer all these queries. Had he been prudent, he would have made everything ready—pen, ink, paper, blotter—before attempting to write his review, and then read on in hot haste, skipping the descriptions and the fine language wherever they occur, and not even yielding to his chief temptation, that of taking a short nap, lest on waking he might have forgotten all he had read. But he omitted these precautions, and he can only chronicle a general sense of boredom.

On the other hand, he has read three of Tolstoy's books that have recently been translated,—two collections of short stories, "The Invaders" and "A Russian Proprietor," and a semi-philosophical, semi-religious treatise, "What to do? Thoughts evoked by the Census of Moscow,"—read them with eager pleasure, with renewed admiration for that great, strong, rugged, and utterly unpractical genius. Yet the pleasure he found in these excellent books was mild indeed compared with the tumultuous delight which many young girls give to the Duchess and Mrs. Alexander. Not in the printed page, but in the eye that reads, lies the real well-spring of pleasure in books:

All rests with those who read. A work or thought  
Is what each makes it to himself, and may  
Be full of great dark meanings, like the sea,  
With shoals of life rushing; or like the air,  
Benighted with the wing of the wild dove,  
Sweeping miles broad o'er the far western woods,  
With mighty glimpses of the central light;  
Or may be nothing—bodiless, spiritless.

Of the American novels of the past year the most delightful is George W. Cable's "Buonaventure," and the Reviewer says this with full remembrance of the fact that Crawford has recently published two excellent novels, "Paul Patoff" and "Marzio's Crucifix," the latter an especially admirable piece of work. "Buonaventure" is an idyl in prose. It has all that delicate artistry which we are accustomed to in the best French pastoral novels. It reads almost like one of Erckmann-Chatrian's novels, with the venue changed, and is as good as any of them. Yet it has a strong flavor of Americanism.

But, though any adjective would suit it better than "delightful," the strongest novel of the past twelvemonth is Edgar Saltus's "The Truth about Tristram Varick." It is a book for our atrabiliar moods, when life seems to be all cant and hypocrisy, fair at the surface, rotten at the core, and we long for some one with strength and sincerity enough to reveal the hideous, latent truth. These

moods pass away, and our liking for Tristram Varick may pass with them, but not our admiration for the perfection of its style, the brilliancy of its epigrams, and the exquisite art with which a most repulsive and unpleasant story has been handled.

Chambers's Encyclopædia has long held its own as one of the very best of the encyclopædias. It claims no rivalry with the Britannica, which treats comparatively few subjects but treats them exhaustively, for its aim is to give short and concise information on a large variety of topics. It is superior to most of the rivals to which it has served as a basis, for the very reason that it has so served. The articles have been written at first- and not at second-hand by specialists familiar with the subjects which they handled. It is not a compilation, but an original work. In the new edition, of which the first volume has just appeared (J. B. Lippincott Co.), the main objection which American readers have urged against this Encyclopædia, the paucity of American topics, has been fully remedied. By a special arrangement, the articles on matters connected with this country have been written here. The whole work has been thoroughly revised, and, where necessary, rewritten, and is handsomely printed from entirely new plates. Among the contributors are W. J. Courthope, Alexander Bain, J. P. Mahaffy, S. Baring Gould, Grant Allen, Prince Kropotkin, John Murray, LL.D., etc.

There are some books that it is a public offence to criticise, as their authors crave only notoriety, and notoriety is gained whenever a knave is pilloried or a fool put into the stocks. The Reviewer therefore will have to deny the pillory to the reverend author of "Why Priests should Wed," and the stocks to the anonymous author of "The Original Mr. Jacobs."

As to the author of "An Essay on Hamlet, An Earthquake of Critics and Criticism" (Charles Brother & Co., Philadelphia), he seems an inoffensive lunatic who can only injure himself by being suffered to remain at large.

Other books received are briefly as follows: From Charles H. Kerr & Co., "Uplifts of Heart and Will," a series of well-meant religious meditations "addressed to earnest men and women," by James H. West. From the Phonographic Institute, "The Manual of Phonography," by Benn Pitman and Jerome B. Howard, the jubilee edition of a book now deservedly in its two-hundredth thousand. From C. A. Montgomery & Co., "Goodholme's Domestic Encyclopædia of Practical Information," a new edition of a very comprehensive and valuable cyclopædia of household lore. From Charles A. Bates, "Recitations for Christmas," selected and arranged by Margaret Holmes. From C. W. Bardeen, "Thirteen Stories of the Far West," by Forbes Heermans, a number of tales not without a certain vigor and humor, but essentially coarse in flavor and too obviously modelled on Bret Harte. From D. C. Heath & Co., "A German Grammar for Schools and Colleges," by Edward S. Joynes, based on the public-school German grammar of A. L. Meissner; and "Italian Grammar," by C. H. Grandgent, tutor of modern languages in Harvard University: two excellent text-books. From the Riverside Press, "Administrative Reform as an Issue in the Next Presidential Canvass," a thoughtful and readable little pamphlet by General C. C. Andrews. From Fords, Howard & Hulbert, "Norway Nights and Russian Days," by S. M. Henry Davis.

## CURRENT NOTES.

IT has been demonstrated by the scientists, as well as by practical experience in baking, that pure carbonic acid gas is produced in the dough, and light, spongy, sweet, and wholesome bread is made more readily by the use of the Royal Baking Powder than with yeast or with any other leavening agent. The action of the baking powder is mechanical entirely, and causes no chemical change in the flour. The water used in mixing the loaf causes the cream of tartar and soda of the baking powder to unite, their dissolution at once begins, the product being pure carbonic acid gas. Thus the leavening gas is obtained by the decomposition or destruction of the leavening agent itself, instead of at the expense of the constituents of the flour. The baking powder, being diffused throughout the mass, so that a suitable portion of it will act upon every particle of the flour, as the water reaches it produces the little volumes of air which, being entangled and held from escape by the paste, form the tiny cells which distend the dough, and this takes place so nearly at the same time in every part of the mass that the whole is raised and made as light as a sponge. A further leavening gas is given off from the completed dissolution of the baking powder under the heat of baking, and this being exerted after the crust of the loaf has been hardened by the first heat of the oven acts to further divide the air-cells already formed, and to texture their walls into that peculiarly flaky sponginess which is the perfection of vesiculation, and makes the most beautiful and delicious bread.

Thus the Royal Baking Powder most perfectly vesiculates the dough by mechanical means, and entirely without fermentation. It fills the loaf with the finest air-cells, making it superlatively light and spongy, and in no way affects or changes the constituents of the flour. There is no destruction of the gluten, or sugar, but all those elements are preserved which were intended by nature, when combined in our bread, to make it literally the "staff of life."

Of far greatest importance, however, is the superior wholesomeness of bread made from Royal Baking Powder, arising from the superlative lightness and tenderness which permit its more ready and perfect assimilation, from its absolute freedom from acidity, and the retention of all the nutritive elements of the flour. It is because of the possession of these qualities also that bread, biscuit, and cake raised by the Royal Baking Powder may be eaten when hot without inconvenience by persons of the most delicate digestive organs. The hot roll, muffin, or griddle-cake raised by it are as wholesome and digestible as warm soup, meat, or any other food.

The assured absolute purity of the Royal Baking Powder adds to its value a merit found by the United States Government chemists in their tests to be possessed by no other leavening agent. All other baking powders or bread preparations contain either lime or alum, which they carry into the food to the injury of the alimentary organs.

THE need of a weekly periodical in this country similar in general style to the "Notes and Queries" which forms such a useful companion for the student and the literary man in Great Britain has long been felt, and it is hoped that



many readers will feel interested in the announcement that such a periodical has been projected in Philadelphia. The title is "American Notes and Queries," and the editors Messrs. William S. Walsh and Henry C. Walsh. The first number will be out on Saturday, May 5, 1888. The contents will consist of articles on quaint, out-of-the-way, and curious subjects, and of queries and their answers. Queries on all questions of general literary and historical interest—folk-lore, the origin of proverbs, familiar sayings, popular customs, quotations, etc., the authorship of books, pamphlets, poems, essays, or stories, the meaning of recon-dite allusions, etc., etc.—are invited from all quarters, and will be answered by editors or contributors. Room will be allowed for the discussion of moot questions, and it is hoped that the periodical may thus become a valuable medium for intercommunication between literary men and specialists. A feature which will undoubtedly add to the interest of the publication will be a series of two hundred and fifty prize questions, for the best, fullest, and completest answers to which prizes amounting to one thousand dollars in cash will be distributed as follows:

Five hundred dollars to the best.

Two hundred and fifty dollars to the second best.

One hundred and twenty-five dollars to the third best.

Seventy-five dollars to the fourth best.

Fifty dollars to the fifth best.

The subscription price will be \$3.00 per annum, 10 cents per single number. Address "American Notes and Queries," 619 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

ONE of the most remarkable cures of that distressing infirmity—stammering—is that of Mr. Edwin S. Johnston, of Philadelphia, who about five years ago had the greatest difficulty to express himself in the simplest way, and was almost unable to prosecute ordinary business. Recovering the use of speech, which had almost deserted him, Mr. Johnston has devoted himself to the assistance of others afflicted in this way, and has been successful in effecting many cures as remarkable as was his own. Prominent citizens of Philadelphia, notably Mr. John Wanamaker, Mr. George W. Childs, Dr. H. C. Wood, Mr. Hamilton Disston, and many others, including the writer of this, have known of the case of Mr. Johnston and are willing to testify to the value of the methods employed by him. Mr. Johnston will be glad, we are sure, to furnish any information desired regarding his treatment, and to give all the necessary testimonials confirming the effectiveness of his method.

"IN for a penny, in for a pound," an old English proverb, is one of many adages which enforce the advisability of going the whole hog when you have once started. Thus, analogous expressions in English are "As good be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb," "Neck or nothing, for the king loves no cripple," "Make a spoon or spoil a horn," and "Over shoes, over boots," in Scotch "Ne'er go to the deil wi' a dishclout in your hands," in German "It is all the same whether one has both legs in the stocks or one" (*Mit beiden Beinen im Stock, oder mit Einem, ist gleichviel*), in Italian "It is the first shower that wets" (*La primiera pioggia è quel che bagna*), and in French "There is nothing like being bespattered for making one defy the slough" (*Il n'est que d'être crotté pour affronter le bourbier*). When Madame de Cornuel remonstrated with a court lady on certain improprieties of conduct, the latter exclaimed, "Oh, do let me enjoy the benefit of my bad reputation!"

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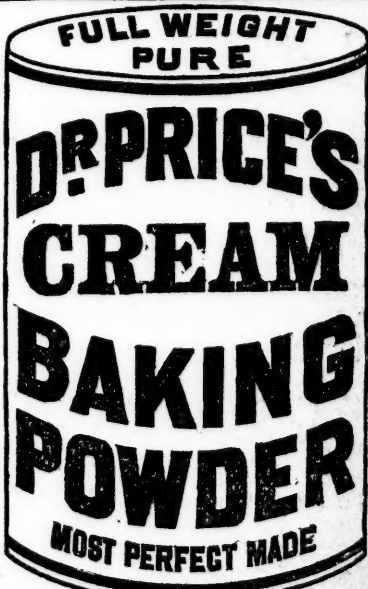
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